



# U.S. Department of Education The Office of Student Financial Assistance

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## Students Channel Satisfaction Study

**Quarter 3, 2000**

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# Introduction

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# Introduction

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## How to Use This Report

### How This Report is Organized

This report is divided into the following sections:

- This **Introduction** presents the project's background and objectives, provides a brief overview of CFI Group, and discusses how the information in this report can be used.
- The **Executive Summary** section presents the key findings as a brief summary of the results and concludes with highlights of the study recommendations.
- The following sections include results, conclusions, and recommendations for each of the five segments:
  - “**1-800-FEDAID**” examines people who have called the toll-free help line of the Department of Education,
  - “**Student Guide**” involves people who have received the Student Guide, a booklet that provides information about financial aid programs,
  - “**Billing and Servicing**” involves people who are currently paying back their student loans,
  - “**Direct Consolidation Loans**” covers people who have consolidated their loans through the Department of Education, and
  - “**Deferment and Forbearance**” comprises people who have student loans that are currently in deferment or forbearance.
- **Appendices: Additional Analysis** presents a comparison of 2Q and 3Q component scores for each segment, and includes some special analyses. **Verbatim Comments** provides the complete body of all verbatim comments collected from the five surveys. These are organized by segment, then by component or category. Finally, the five **Questionnaires** used for this study are included in the third appendix.



## Introduction continued

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### How to Interpret and Use the Results

In general, the results presented in this report serve as a decision tool for use in conjunction with other customer and management information available to the SFA. Use the results to assist with:

- determining those areas on which to focus quality improvements;
- monitoring changes in customer perceptions, attitudes, and behavior over time; and
- evaluating the success of on-going quality improvement efforts (long term)

For each segment, turn first to the “General Conclusions and Findings” section. This brief summary provides a snapshot of SFA’s overall performance, identifies high-leverage areas where improvements will have significant impact on satisfaction, and provides specific areas where customers would like to see improvements. The respective “General Conclusions and Findings” sections can be found on:

- Page 15 for 1-800-4FEDAID;
- Page 25 for Student Guide;
- Page 33 for Billing and Servicing;
- Page 41 for Direct Consolidation; and
- Page 49 for Deferment and Forbearance.

After reading the “General Conclusions and Findings” for a given segment, turn to the subsequent specific discussion for each major component of interest. These discussions include a review of the attributes within that component, selected verbatim comments pertaining to that component, and any additional analysis that may be relevant toward understanding the results. These sections also pinpoint specific areas for improvement.





## Introduction continued

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### Key Words You Will Want to Understand in Reading this Report

Results from this analysis are presented through numerous charts and tables provided in this report. To understand these charts and tables, some definitions are in order:

**Attribute** – Attributes reflect different aspects or qualities of a product/service component experienced by customers, which may contribute to satisfaction. Each attribute is captured by a specific scaled question from the questionnaire.

**Attribute Rating** – An attribute rating is the average of all responses to each question. Each rating has been converted to a 0-100 scale. In general, it indicates how negatively (low ratings) or positively (high ratings) customers perceive specific issues.

**Component** – Each component is defined by a set of attributes that are conceptually and empirically related to each other. For example, a component entitled “Customer Experience” may include two questions (“easy to do business with” and “provides consistent service”) about the perception of the customer’s interactions with a firm.

**Component Score** – A component score represents that component’s “performance”. In general, they tell how negatively (low scores) or positively (high scores) customers feel about the organization’s performance in general areas. Quantitatively, the score is the weighted average of the attributes that define the component in the CFI Group model. These scores are standardized on a 0-100 scale.

**Component Impact** – The impact of a component represents its ability to affect the customer’s satisfaction and future behavior. Components with higher impacts have greater leverage on measures of satisfaction and behavior than those with lower impacts. Quantitatively, a component’s impact represents the amount of change in Overall Satisfaction that would occur if that component’s score were to increase by 5 points.



## Introduction continued

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### Background and Project Objectives

The 1998 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Programs (signed October 7, 1998) established a Performance Based Organization (PBO) to administer the Student Financial Assistance Programs (SFA) at the U.S. Department of Education. The SFA is the first such PBO in the federal government, and one of its mandates is to measure customer satisfaction and to devise means to maintain and improve these measures over time for all of its customers.

To this end, the SFA was among the first 30 high-impact federal agencies participating in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) in 1999. The ACSI, established in 1994, is a uniform, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with goods and services available to U.S. consumers, including both the private and public sectors. Developed by Dr. Claes Fornell at the University of Michigan, the methodology for the ACSI has become the standard measure for other national indices as well, including Sweden, Korea, and, recently, the entire European Union. During the SFA's participation in 1999, two "segments" or "processes" were measured by the ACSI: the student application process, and the Department's forms and publications. The results from these initial studies created a demand to measure other segments.

CFI Group, a management consulting firm that specializes in the application of the ACSI methodology to individual organizations, worked to develop these additional measures for SFA. This report focuses on people who have student loans served by the Department of Education/the Student Financial Assistance Program. Different stages in the loan process have been studied/chosen: 1-800-4FEDAID, the Student Guide, Billing and Servicing, Direct Consolidation Loan, and Deferment and Forbearance. Each of the five different aspects represents a separate segment for analytical purposes. In total, this study collected data from 1,207 respondents, broken down as follows:

Segment	Collected Sample Size
1-800-4FEDAID	246
The Student Guide	239
Billing and Servicing	241
Direct Loan Consolidation	245
Deferment and Forbearance	236
Total	1207

### About CFI Group and the ACSI Methodology

CFI Group uses the ACSI methodology to identify the causes of satisfaction and relates satisfaction to business performance measures such as propensity to recommend a product or service, trust, compliance, etc. The methodology measures quality, satisfaction, and performance, and links them using a structural equation model. By structurally exploring these relationships, the system overcomes the inherent inability of people to report precisely the relative impact of the many factors influencing their satisfaction. Using CFI Group's results, organizations can identify and improve those factors that will improve customer satisfaction and other measures of business performance.



# Executive Summary

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## Executive Summary

This report presents customer satisfaction ratings and scores for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance Programs. Specifically, this report focuses on people whose student loans are currently under SFA's program's rules. Five specific aspects of the financial aid program have been chosen: 1-800-4FEDAID, the Student Guide, Billing and Servicing, Direct Consolidation Loan, and Deferment and Forbearance.

All scores and ratings presented in this report are calculated and presented using the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI, established in 1994, is a uniform, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with goods and services available to U.S. consumers, including both the private and public sectors. It has recently been adopted as the standard customer satisfaction measure by 30 high impact federal agencies. The ACSI presents scores as an index from 0 to 100, with 100 being the best possible.

Key results for this quarter, for all five segments, are shown below:

	1-800-4FEDAID	Student Guide	Billing and Servicing	Direct Loan Consolidation	Deferment and Forbearance
ACSI Score	83.5	80.5	69.7	73.9	78.1
Complaint Rate	1.6%	6.3%	26.6%	16.7%	15.7%
Confidence	--	--	77.0	78.9	81.2
Recommendation	91.0	91.5	--	83.4	87.7
Sample Size	n=246	n=239	n=241	n=245	n=236

## Conclusions

- There are no significant ACSI score improvements from Q2 to Q3 2000, except for 1-800-4FEDAID (80.2 to 83.5);
- There are no significant changes in the performance outcome measures from Q2 to Q3 2000 (Customer Complaints, Confidence, or Recommendation);
- For all five segments, the Perceived Quality score is consistently higher than respondents' Prior Expectations; and
- One consistent observation among segments is that the professionalism of SFA staff rates highly where it is measured.

	Q2/2000	Q3/2000	Difference	Significant at 90% C.I.
1-800-4FEDAID	80.2	83.5	+3.3	↑↑
Student Guide	79.3	80.5	+1.2	
Billing and Servicing	71.5	69.7	-1.8	
Direct Loan Consolidation	74.9	73.9	-1.0	
Deferment and Forbearance	76.1	78.1	+2.0	



## Executive Summary

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### Recommendations

- Increase awareness of refinancing options. Even though there are numerous options and terms available to borrowers, there appears to be a lack of comprehensive knowledge among borrowers of the many repayment plan options. Increasing borrowers' awareness in the refinancing process could have a positive effect on their satisfaction.
- Improve timing of statements. Borrowers emphasize the importance of receiving a bill earlier, thus allowing more time to make the payment, and for the bill to arrive on approximately the same date every month, to assist their budgetary planning.
- Take steps to clarify information on statements and publications. Whenever asked, borrowers consistently indicated that the clarity of instructions is lacking. This sentiment is also expressed in the Schools and Financial Partners Channels.
- Perceived Quality exceeds Customer Expectations, indicating a need to maintain present high quality standards across business processes. While this is an indication that SFA is performing better than what customers expect, continued high quality may cause the expectations bar to be raised in the future. If Perceived Quality remains high, expectations of customers will undoubtedly rise, making it increasingly difficult to match—and exceed—their expectations.
- In areas of strength, maintain present levels of support. Do not assume that high-performing segments can be ignored. Any neglect, or redirection of resources, could cause satisfaction scores to quickly drop.



# Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID

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## Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID

### General Conclusions and Findings

As in the prior study, 1-800-4FEDAID has the highest overall customer satisfaction score at 83.5. This represents a significant improvement over the previous score of 80.2. Not surprisingly, this segment also has the lowest complaint rate.

Other key component scores are shown in the following table:

	Quarter 2/2000	Quarter 3/2000
ACSI Score	80.2	83.5
Likelihood to Use Again	90.4	90.9
Recommendation	89.2	91.0
Customer complaint rate	1.2%	1.6%

All of the components in this segment have a score of 80 or higher, indicating that there are no real weak areas needing immediate attention. The two components that have the highest total impact on customer satisfaction, Professionalism (1.9), and Helpfulness (1.5), are also the highest scoring components. While Professionalism, with a score of 87.7, and the attribute “friendliness of the representative” at 88.4, leaves little room for improvement, comments from customers indicate that they would like the telephone representatives to be even more friendly. The high impact of this component upon satisfaction indicates that the score could drop quickly, and most likely would be a result of lowered perceptions of the friendliness of the representatives.

*“More friendly people.”*

*“Customer Service could be a lot more friendly.”*

Customers indicate that other potential improvements could be realized in the areas of Accessibility and Helpfulness, even though these component scores are quite high. Although Accessibility has shown a significant improvement over last period, customers desire more representatives to answer the calls. Areas where customers indicate a need for attention:

- Availability of a representative (81.6)
- Simplicity of the phone system (82.7)

Along with more representatives, customers would like the representatives to provide more complete information and to solve their problem the first time they call. Customers indicate these areas could slip:

- Thoroughness of information provided (85.1)
- Ability to answer question on first call (85.3)

*“Limited on what they can do as result of calling. Give more latitude on what they can do over the phone as opposed to hard copy.”*

*“The kind of information I needed, they could not give me.”*



## Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID continued

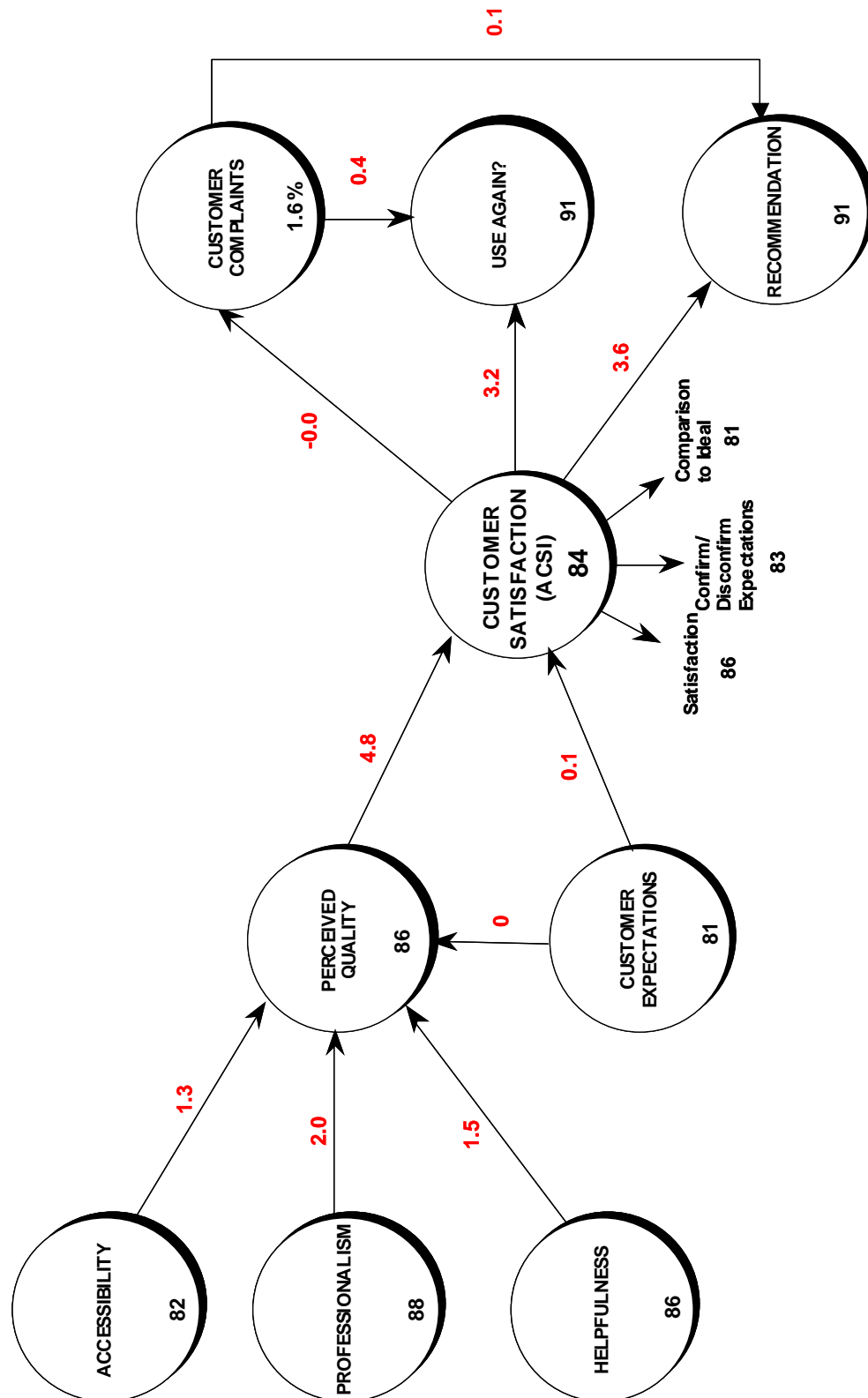
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Students were asked if they have seen an overall improvement in the toll-free information service in the past 12 months. 27% have seen an improvement, while 20% saw no progress made in this area. The majority of respondents (53%) stated that they do not know whether or not they saw an improvement. This may suggest that students do not call the 1-800 number repeatedly so they are unable to notice changes in the service.



## Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID continued

The ACSI Model Picture for 1-800-4FEDAID

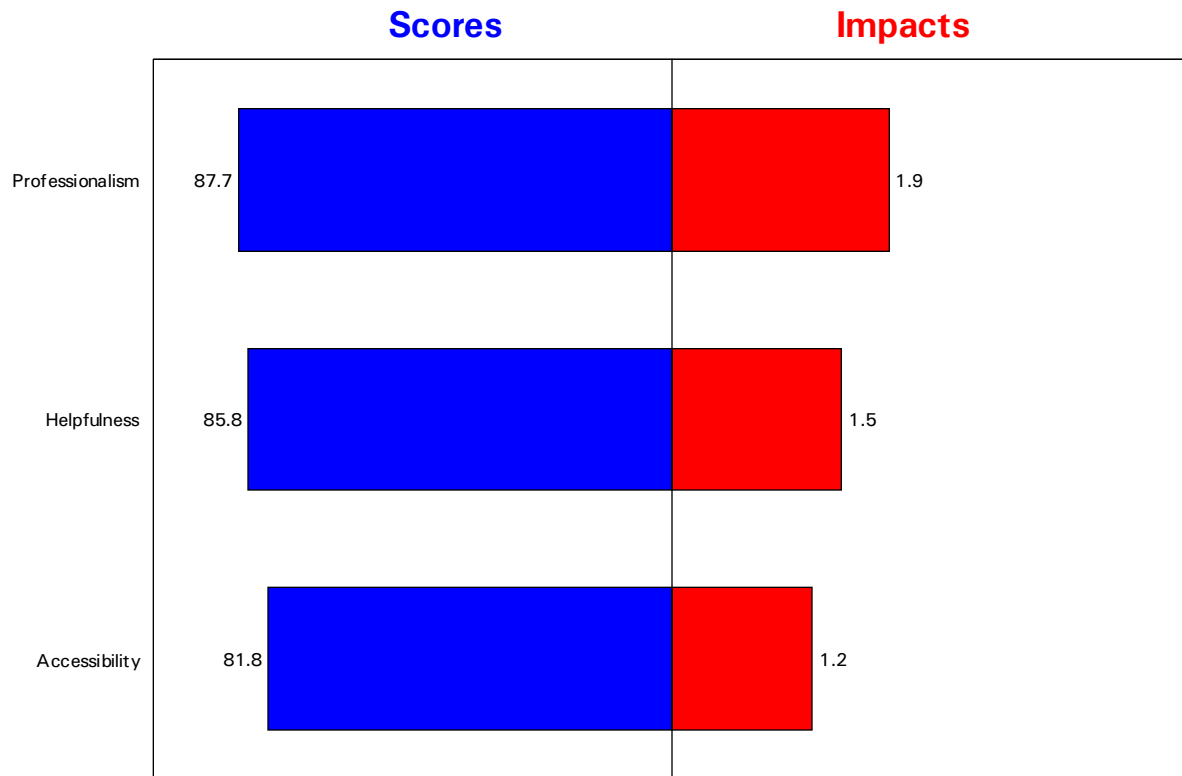


*Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.*



## Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID continued

### Component Scores and Impacts for 1-800-4FEDAID



*Note: Impacts represent total impact of component upon Customer Satisfaction.*



## Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID continued

### Scores and Ratings

	<b>Q3 2000</b>
<b>Customer Satisfaction (Index)</b>	<b>83.5</b>
Satisfaction	86.4
Satisfaction Compared to Expectations	82.9
Satisfaction Compared to Ideal	81.4
<b>Overall Quality</b>	<b>86.1</b>
Overall quality	86.1
<b>Prior Expectations</b>	<b>81.1</b>
Prior Expectations	81.1
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>81.8</b>
Simplicity of Phone System	82.7
Availability of Representative	81.6
<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>87.7</b>
Friendliness of Representative	88.4
Willingness to Help	88.7
Understanding of your needs	86.8
<b>Helpfulness</b>	<b>85.8</b>
Ability to Answer Question on First Call	85.3
Thoroughness of information provided	85.1
Accuracy of information provided	87.7
<b>Customer Complaints</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Complaints?	1.6
<b>Use Again?</b>	<b>90.9</b>
Likelihood of Using in Future	90.9
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>91.0</b>
Likelihood to Recommend	91.0



## Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID continued

### Detailed Discussion of Components

#### Accessibility

Accessibility had a significant increase in score compared to last quarter's measure (77.7 vs. 81.8). Although it has a relatively high score, this component still has the lowest rating among the components in this segment. The individual attribute ratings are shown below. Accessibility also has the lowest total impact upon satisfaction in this segment at 1.2. Therefore, a 5 point improvement in this component would lead to a 1.2 point increase in the Customer Satisfaction score.

<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>81.8</b>
Simplicity of Phone System	82.7
Availability of Representative	81.6

Only two verbatim comments voice concern about Accessibility. Both are regarding the need for more telephone representatives:

*"Make more operators available. Mail information to customers. To contact live operators."*

*"More representatives."*

#### Professionalism

Professionalism of the telephone representative received the highest score among the components at 87.7 (compared to its previous score of 85.8). As apparent by the individual ratings shown below, "understanding of your needs" received the lowest rating among the attributes. Professionalism has the highest total impact on satisfaction of 1.9. A high impact may have a greater effect on Customer Satisfaction, but an already high score makes improvement harder to accomplish. On the other hand, a decrease in the score, perhaps because of a decline in resources, would have negative consequences on Customer Satisfaction.

<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>87.7</b>
Friendliness of Representative	88.4
Willingness to Help	88.7
Understanding of your needs	86.8

Even though the friendliness attribute has a high rating, borrowers stress the need for friendly representatives in the verbatim responses, suggesting the attribute rating could go even higher:

*"More friendly people."*

*"Customer Service could be a lot more friendly."*

*"To have friendlier service reps."*



## Section 1: 1-800-4FEDAID continued

### Helpfulness

Students who have called the toll-free number rated the Helpfulness component quite high, with a score of 85.8. Individual attribute ratings are shown below. The total impact of Helpfulness upon Customer Satisfaction is 1.5. The strength of the impact indicates that Customer Satisfaction is sensitive to changes in this component.

Although the scores are favorable, the limited number of verbatim responses indicate a dissatisfaction in the quality of the assistance respondents received:

<b>Helpfulness</b>	<b>85.8</b>
Ability to Answer Question on First Call	85.3
Thoroughness of information provided	85.1
Accuracy of information provided	87.7

*“Limited on what they can do as result of calling. Give more latitude on what they can do over the phone as opposed to hard copy.”*

*“The kind of information I needed, they could not give me.”*

*“They never say the same thing. One tells you something and the other tells you something different.”*

### Likelihood to Use Again and Recommendation

Borrowers were asked how likely they would be to call 1-800-4FEDAID in the future. They were also asked how likely they would be to recommend to others that they call the toll free service. Both scores were very high, with Use Again receiving a score of 90.9 and Recommendation scoring 91.0.

<b>Use Again?</b>	<b>90.9</b>
Likelihood of Using in Future	90.9

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>91.0</b>
Likelihood to Recommend	91.0







## Section 2: Student Guide

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## Section 2: Student Guide

### General Conclusions and Findings

The Student Guide segment has the second highest customer satisfaction score, at 80.5. While the Student Guide shows improvement in all measured areas from the last reported scores, only Availability showed significant change. The Recommendation score is the highest across all segments.

Other key component scores are shown in the following table:

	Quarter 2/2000	Quarter 3/2000
ACSI Score	79.3	80.5
Likelihood to Use Again	86.4	87.9
Recommendation	89.4	91.5
Customer complaint rate	9.5%	6.3%

During this reporting period, customers gave Availability a significantly improved score (to 92.8), indicating that the guide is more readily available than it was in the previous reporting period and it was delivered promptly after the initial request. With their high total impacts upon satisfaction of 1.3, Availability and Content are the components that affect customer satisfaction the most. However, the high score of Availability indicates it is unlikely to see any significant improvement. The Availability score could drop off quickly, though, if the supply of the Student Guide does not match demand, or delivery time drags.

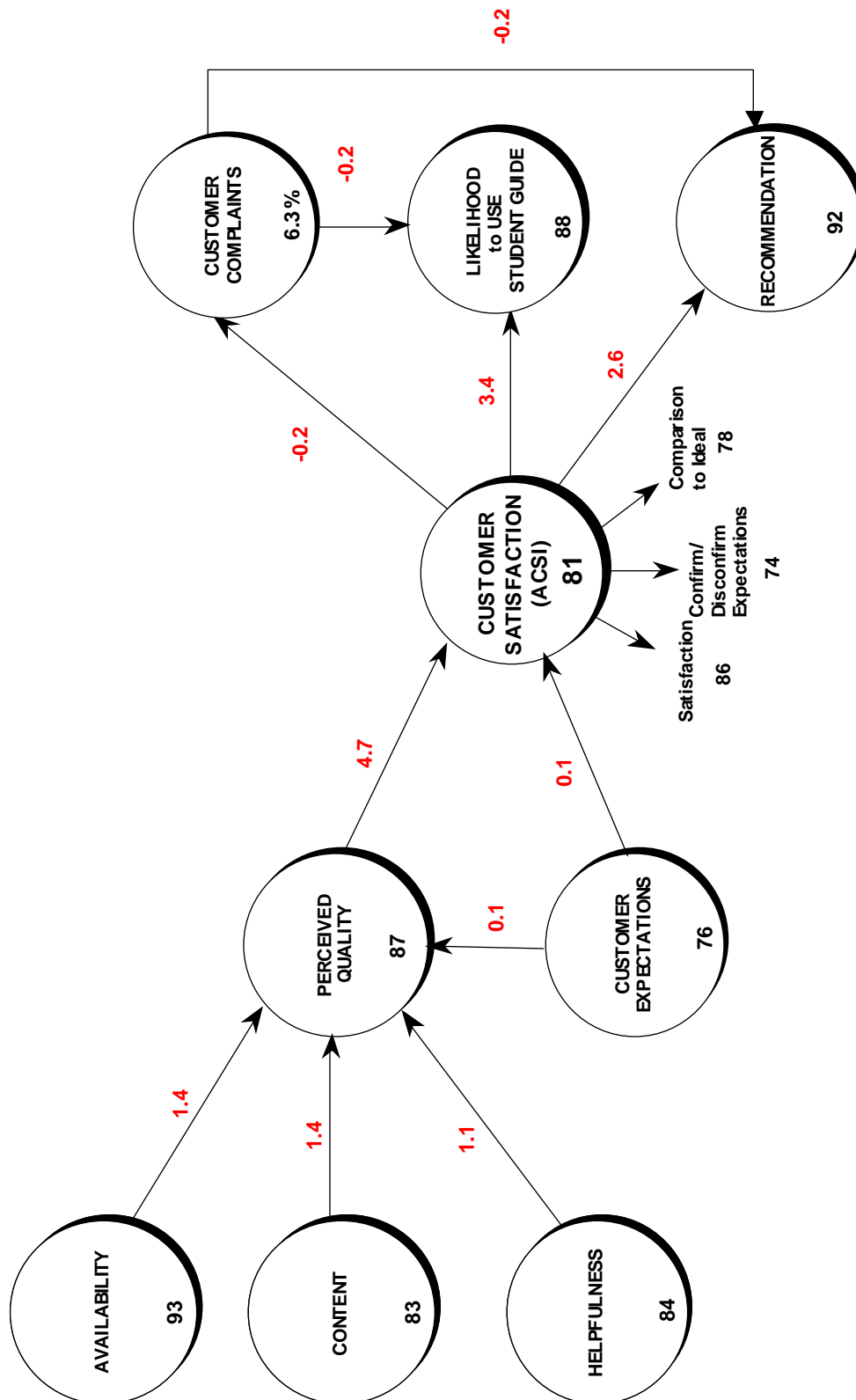
Looking at the Student Guide, its high overall satisfaction score indicates a segment that is performing well. However, a few areas exist that could use some assistance. Customers have concerns about the content of the guide and the usefulness of the information it contains. Content, the lowest scoring component, at 82.7, and Helpfulness, at 84.0, both represent areas that could be improved, which would raise the overall satisfaction score even higher. These potential improvement areas are:

- Relevance of information (78.8)
- Ease of finding what is needed (81.7)
- Thoroughness of information (83.8)



## Section 2: Student Guide continued

The ACSI Model Picture for Student Guide

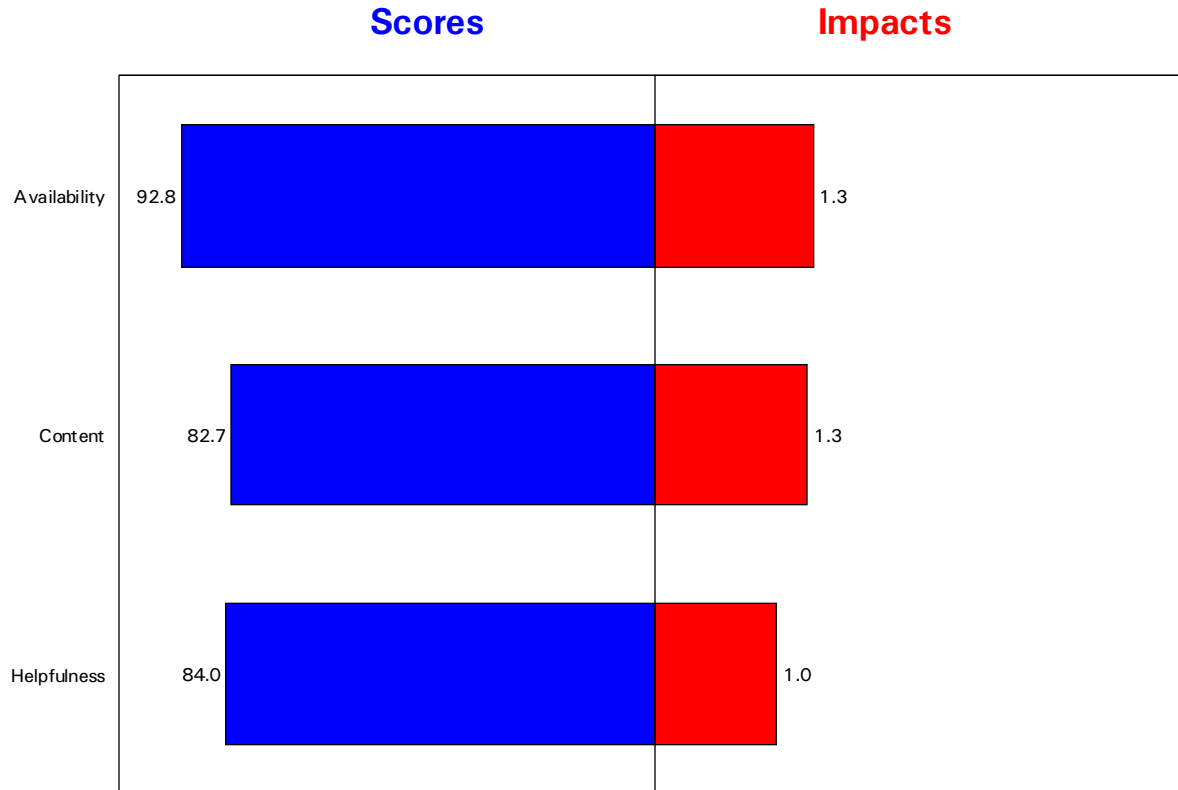


*Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.*



## Section 2: Student Guide continued

### Component Scores and Impacts for Student Guide



*Note: Impacts represent total impact of component upon Customer Satisfaction.*



## Section 2: Student Guide continued

### Scores and Ratings

	<b>Q3 2000</b>
<b>Customer Satisfaction (Index)</b>	<b>80.5</b>
Satisfaction	85.7
Satisfaction Compared to Expectations	73.5
Satisfaction Compared to Ideal	78.3
<b>Overall Quality</b>	<b>87.2</b>
Overall quality	87.2
<b>Prior Expectations</b>	<b>76.0</b>
Prior Expectations	76.0
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>92.8</b>
Availability of Student Guide	92.6
Promptness of delivery	92.9
<b>Content</b>	<b>82.7</b>
Ease of finding what is needed	81.7
Thoroughness of information	83.8
<b>Helpfulness</b>	<b>84.0</b>
Ease of understanding information	84.9
Relevance of information	78.8
Accuracy of information	88.1
<b>Customer Complaints</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Called because of any confusing or unclear language in Student Guide?	6.3
<b>Likelihood to use Student Guide</b>	<b>87.9</b>
Likelihood to use Student Guide again	87.9
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>91.5</b>
Likelihood to recommend	91.5



## Section 2: Student Guide continued

### Detailed Discussion of Components

#### Availability

Availability of the Student Guide is the highest scoring component (92.8) with a significant increase of 3.4 points from last quarter. Respondents gave similar ratings to both of the attributes as shown in the table below. Availability and Content both had the highest total impact upon Customer Satisfaction at 1.3. Significant improvements in Availability would not be easy due to the already high score, but keep in mind that a fall in the score could have a negative effect on Perceived Quality and Customer Satisfaction.

<b>Availability</b>	<b>92.8</b>
Availability of Student Guide	92.6
Promptness of delivery	92.9

There are no verbatim comments regarding the availability or delivery of the Student Guide.

#### Content

Content of the Student Guide remained stable at 82.7 (compared to 82.3 last quarter) and is the lowest scoring component. The individual attribute ratings are shown in the table below. Content has a total impact of 1.3 making it a key component for improvement, especially in the matter of “ease of finding what is needed”. An increase of 5 points in the Content score would lead to a 1.3 improvement in Customer Satisfaction.

<b>Content</b>	<b>82.7</b>
Ease of finding what is needed	81.7
Thoroughness of information	83.8

Although the “thoroughness of information” has a higher rating than the “ease of finding what is needed”, borrowers indicate that more information in the Student Guide would be beneficial:

*“Give out a little more information.”*

*“A further scope of the subject, of the language.”*

*“More information for adults continuing education.”*



## Section 2: Student Guide continued

### Helpfulness

The score for the Helpfulness of the Student Guide remained steady at 84.0. The individual attribute ratings are shown in the table below. Similar to last quarter, there is a large gap in the ratings (9.3 points) between “relevance of information” and “accuracy of information.” Helpfulness has a total impact upon customer satisfaction of 1.0. The relatively high score may make improvement in this component difficult but “relevance of information” is an area that could be improved.

<b>Helpfulness</b>	<b>84.0</b>
Ease of understanding information	84.9
Relevance of information	78.8
Accuracy of information	88.1

There were very few responses about the Helpfulness of the Student Guide but some borrowers felt that it wasn’t very useful:

*“Put it (Student Guide) in plain English.”*

*“I recommend the language be clearer. More useful information.”*

*“...I just felt that I didn’t get much out of it (Student Guide).”*

### Likelihood to Use Student Guide Again and Recommendation

The rating where respondents are asked the likelihood that they would use the Student Guide again increased from 86.4 to 87.9. This is a direct outcome of Customer Satisfaction and is therefore influenced by all the components. The likelihood of Recommending the Student Guide also increased to 91.5 (up from 89.4).

<b>Likelihood to use Student Guide</b>	<b>87.9</b>
Likelihood to use Student Guide again	87.9

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>91.5</b>
Likelihood to recommend	91.5





## Section 3: Billing & Servicing

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## Section 3: Billing & Servicing

### General Conclusions and Findings

The Billing and Servicing segment has the lowest customer satisfactions score (69.7) of all the segments. This represents a slight, but not statistically significant, drop from the previous measurement period. At best, this segment is showing no change from the previous quarter. At 26.6%, the Complaint rate is the worst among the five segments. A good portion of the discontent focuses around the short length of time customers are given to pay a bill once it is received.

Other key component scores are shown in the following table:

	Quarter 2/2000	Quarter 3/2000
ACSI Score	71.5	69.7
Confidence	76.9	77.0
Customer complaint rate	24.4%	26.6%

The discontent in this segment is reflected in the lowest scoring component, Timeliness, with Content and Accuracy virtually tied for the top score (79.5 and 79.3, respectively). Timeliness, with its combination of low score and reasonably high total impact upon satisfaction of 1.1 suggests this component needs attention. Areas of priority are:

- Amount of time given before payments are due (72.8)
- Consistency in when you receive statements (77.3)

The attribute, “amount of time given before payments are due” is the lowest scoring attribute in the Billing and Servicing segment. The verbatim comments indicate a frustration with the lack of time between receiving the statement and when payment is due.

*“Speed up the process by getting the statements to me to avoid higher interest. I don’t receive my statement until five days before it’s due. Resolve this, and I would be happy.”*

*“The statement can come out sooner and be very clear on what the students are paying back.”*

To a lesser degree, Content, with the highest total impact upon satisfaction of 1.3, should also be looked at as an area of potential improvement, particularly in:

- Sufficiency of information provided on the statement (77.9)

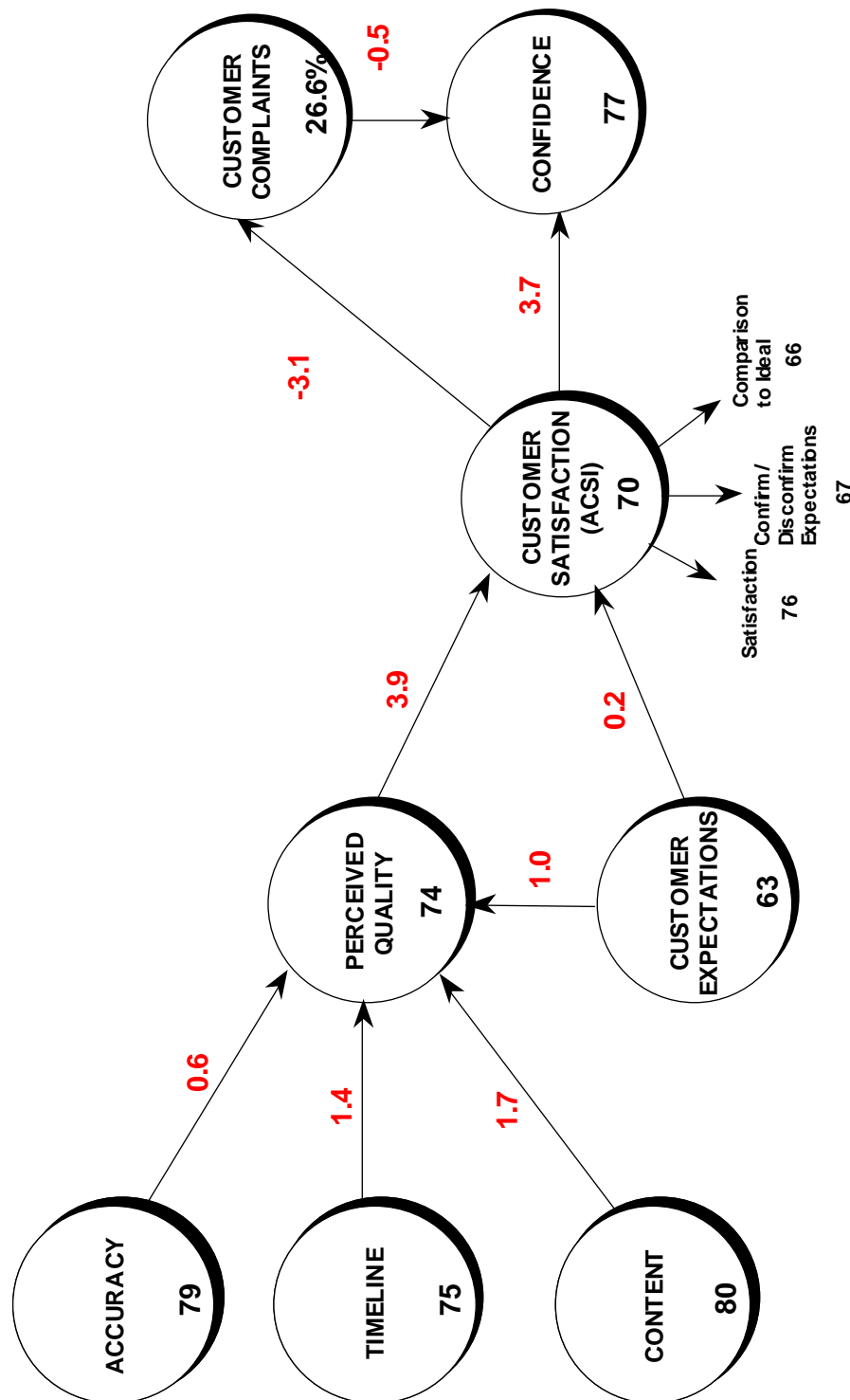
Improving the information on a customer’s statement could result in a higher level of confidence in the process.

Students were asked whether they have seen an overall improvement in the billing services in the past 12 months. The majority of respondents (58%) have seen no advancement in this area, while 32% have.



## Section 3: Billing & Servicing continued

The ACSI Model Picture for Billing & Servicing

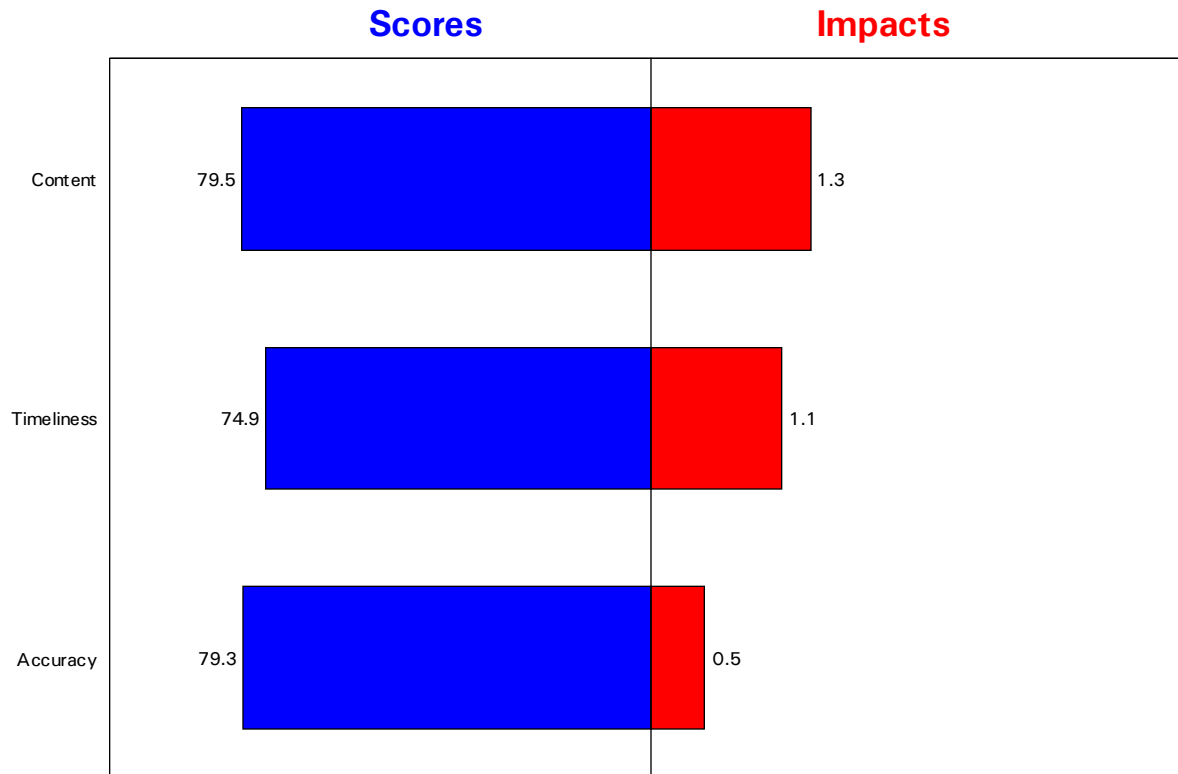


*Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.*



## Section 3: Billing & Servicing continued

### Component Scores and Impacts for Billing & Servicing



*Note: Impacts represent total impact of component upon Customer Satisfaction.*



## Section 3: Billing & Servicing continued

### Scores and Ratings

	<b>Q3 2000</b>
<b>Customer Satisfaction (Index)</b>	<b>69.7</b>
Satisfaction	75.6
Satisfaction Compared to Expectations	66.5
Satisfaction Compared to Ideal	66.3
<b>Overall Quality</b>	<b>74.0</b>
Overall quality	74.0
<b>Prior Expectations</b>	<b>62.6</b>
Prior Expectations	62.6
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>79.3</b>
Accuracy of Statement Balance	79.4
Accuracy of Info on Past Payments	79.5
<b>Timeliness</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Consistency in when you receive statements	77.3
Amount of time given before payments are due	72.8
<b>Content</b>	<b>79.5</b>
Ease of reading the statement	81.2
Sufficiency of information provided on the statement	77.9
<b>Customer Complaints</b>	<b>26.6</b>
Complaints?	26.6
<b>Confidence</b>	<b>77.0</b>
Confidence about accurately servicing loan	77.0



## Section 3: Billing & Servicing continued

### Detailed Discussion of Components

#### Accuracy

Accuracy of the monthly statements dropped from 81.2 to 79.3 this quarter. The individual attribute ratings are shown in the table below. Borrowers seem equally satisfied with the “accuracy of statement balance” and the “accuracy of information on past payments”. The Accuracy component has the lowest total impact upon satisfaction (0.5) which means Customer Satisfaction is not very sensitive to changes in this component and a 5 point improvement would only result in a marginal increase in the Customer Satisfaction score.

<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>79.3</b>
Accuracy of Statement Balance	79.4
Accuracy of Info on Past Payments	79.5

The following comments are the only ones related to Accuracy. Even though the scores suggest borrowers are happy with this component of the billing process, a few expressed a desire for more accurate billing:

*“More frequent and accurate billing.”*

*“Have statements arrive sooner. Have balances reflect more accurate billing.”*

*“Make accurate statements about proper balance.”*

#### Timeliness

Respondents rated the Timeliness of receiving their statement at 74.9 (compared to 72.7 last quarter). The individual attribute ratings below suggest that borrowers would like more time to make payments. With a high total impact (1.1) and a relatively high score, an improvement in the Timeliness component could have a positive impact on Customer Satisfaction, as well as Confidence and Recommendation.

<b>Timeliness</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Consistency in when you receive statements	77.3
Amount of time given before payments are due	72.8

The verbatim responses echo an indication from the attribute scores that there is a desire to have the statements arrive sooner, allowing for more time to make payments:

*“The statement can come out sooner and be very clear on what the students are paying back.”*

*“Have statements arrive sooner.”*

*“Speed up the process by getting the statements to me to avoid higher interest. I don’t receive my statement until five days before it’s due. Resolve this, and I would be happy.”*



## Section 3: Billing & Servicing continued

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### Content

The Content of the statement has a score of 79.5, making it the highest scoring component in this segment. The individual attribute ratings are shown below. Once again, “sufficiency of information provided on the statement” is the question with the lowest rating. This component has the highest impact at 1.3. An improvement of 5 points in the Content component would have a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction.

<b>Content</b>	<b>79.5</b>
Ease of reading the statement	81.2
Sufficiency of information provided on the statement	77.9

Respondents rated the “ease of reading the statement” highly, but a few borrowers feel there is a need for improvement in this area:

*“Have better statements. Easier to read.”*

*“Just have the bill more reflective of the actual payments.”*

*“Make the bills clearer.”*

### Confidence

Borrowers are asked how confident they are that the Department of Education is accurately servicing their loan. Servicing can include processing payments, maintaining proper account information and providing other information about taxes and interest rate changes. The score for Confidence is shown in the table below:

<b>Confidence</b>	<b>77.0</b>
Confidence about accurately servicing loan	77.0





## Section 4:

# Direct Consolidation Loans

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## Section 4: Direct Consolidation Loans

### General Conclusions and Findings

	Quarter 2/2000	Quarter 3/2000
ACSI Score	74.9	73.9
Confidence	78.3	78.9
Recommendation	85.0	83.4
Customer complaint rate	13.8%	16.7%

The Direct Consolidation Loan segment has the second lowest satisfaction score of 73.9, off slightly from the previous measurement period, while Customer Complaints have risen to 16.7%. The highest scoring component is Professionalism, which is important, as customers want to have their needs understood and met by the staff assisting them with the consolidation process. As in other segments where it has been asked, “friendliness of the department personnel” is rated the highest among all attributes. The Professionalism component has the highest total impact upon customer satisfaction, at 1.8, but its relatively high score could make improvement difficult. One area that customers indicate the component is a little soft is, “understanding of your needs” (77.1).

Consolidation Options has the second highest total impact upon customer satisfaction (1.1), and the lowest score (74.9), indicating that there is room for improvement in this area. Consolidation Options is a combination of availability of options, interest rate terms, and convenience of repayment options. Given that there are numerous repayment plans available, it appears that respondents are not aware of all their options.

*“They charge too much interest. Possibly observe the situation and if someone is trying to pay they should give them a break on the interest loan or cut them some slack.”*

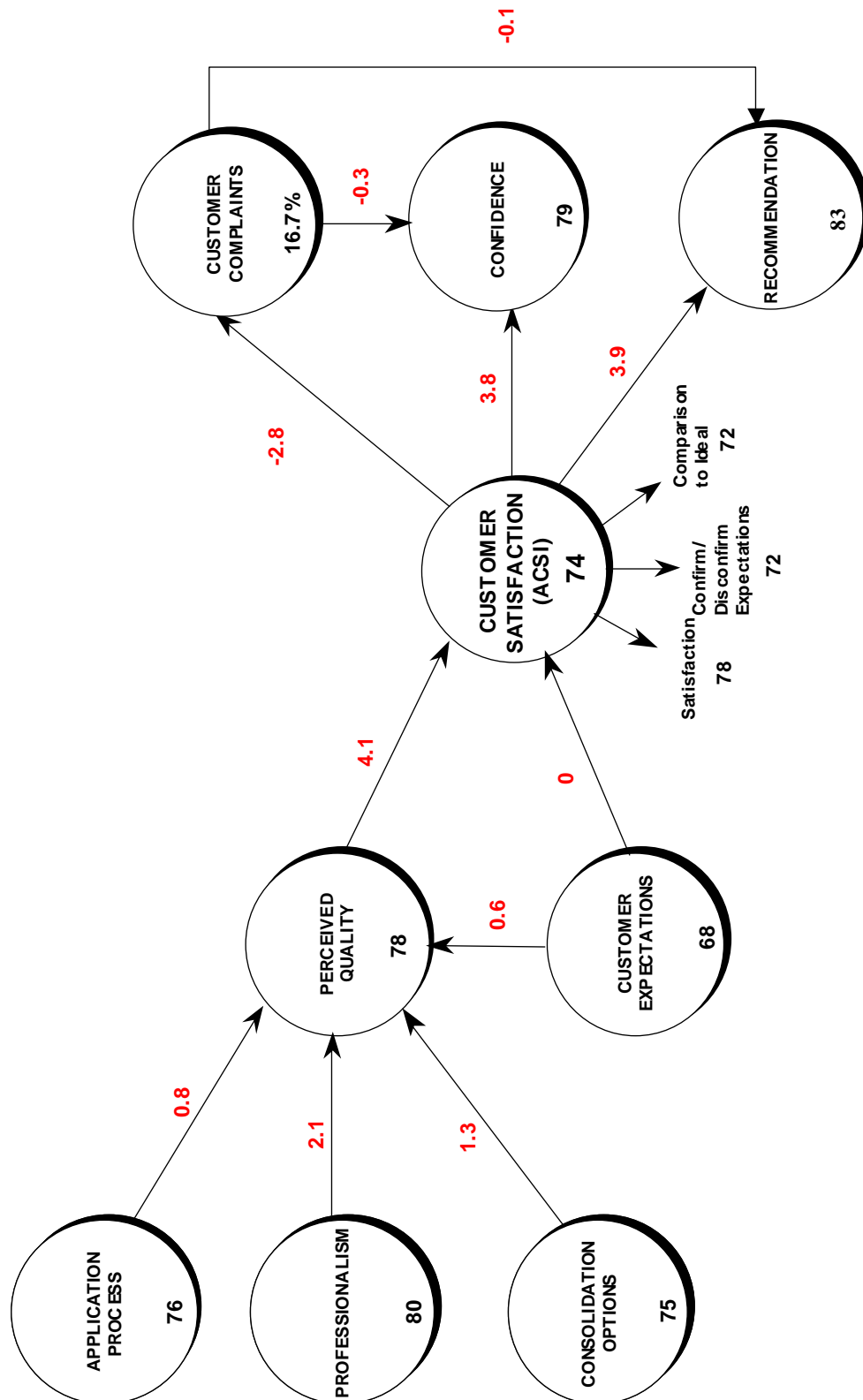
Areas with potential for improvement include:

- Interest rate terms (70.5)
- Availability of consolidation options (76.2)
- Understanding of your needs (77.1)



## Section 4: Direct Consolidation Loans continued

The ACSI Model Picture for Direct Consolidation Loans

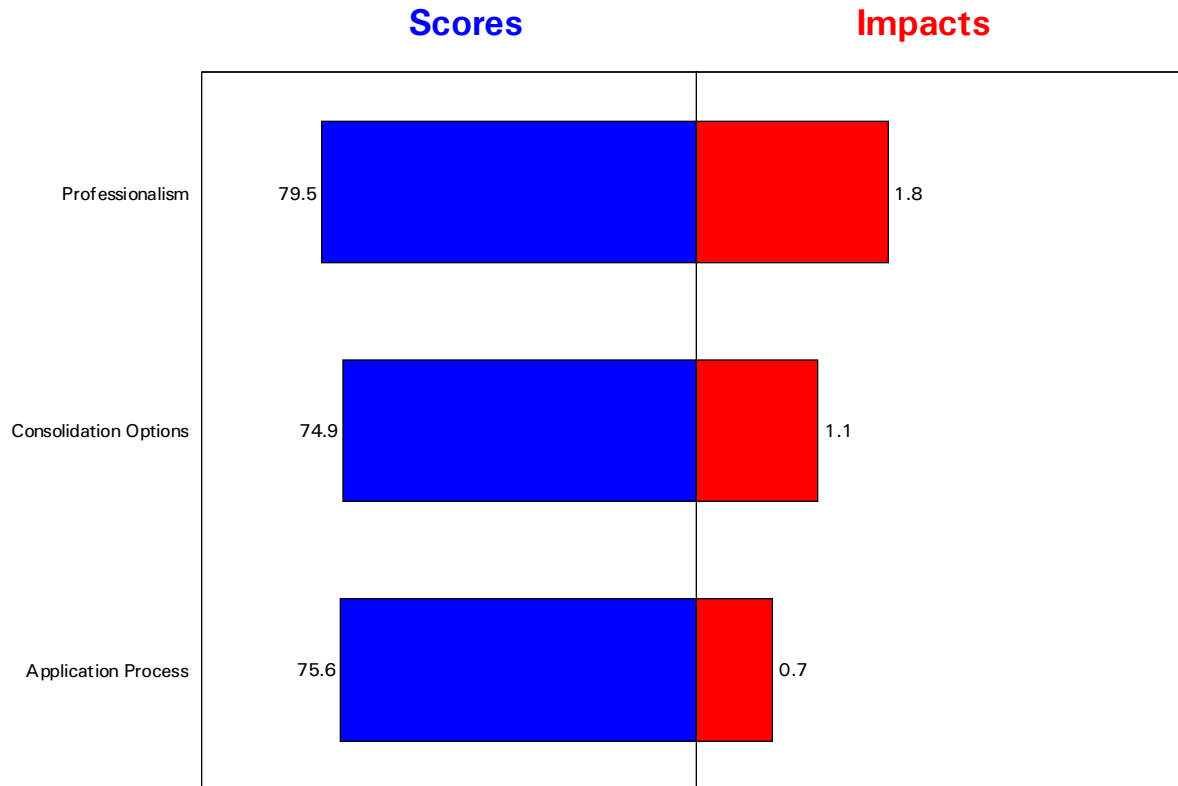


*Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.*



## Section 4: Direct Consolidation Loans *continued*

### Component Scores and Impacts for Direct Consolidation Loans



*Note: Impacts represent total impact of component upon Customer Satisfaction.*



## Section 4: Direct Consolidation Loans continued

### Scores and Ratings

	<b>Q3 2000</b>
<b>Customer Satisfaction (Index)</b>	<b>73.9</b>
Satisfaction	78.3
Satisfaction compared with expectations	72.2
Satisfaction compared with ideal	72.1
<b>Overall Quality</b>	<b>77.5</b>
Overall quality	77.5
<b>Prior Expectations</b>	<b>67.6</b>
Prior Expectations	67.6
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Application Process</b>	<b>75.6</b>
Simplicity of application	74.5
Amount of supporting documentation required	76.2
<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>79.5</b>
Willingness of department personnel to help you	79.0
Understanding of your needs	77.1
Friendliness of department personnel	83.4
<b>Consolidation Options</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Availability of consolidation options	76.2
Interest rate terms	70.5
Convenience of repayment options	78.6
<b>Customer Complaints</b>	<b>16.7</b>
Complaints?	16.7
<b>Confidence</b>	<b>78.9</b>
Confidence in servicing your loan	78.9
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>83.4</b>
Likelihood to Recommend?	83.4



## Section 4: Direct Consolidation Loans continued

### Detailed Discussion of Components

#### Application Process

The quality of the Application Process is rated at 75.6 (compared to 76.5 for the previous quarter). Individual attribute ratings are shown below. The total impact upon Customer Satisfaction is the lowest among the three components at 0.7. Therefore, Customer Satisfaction is not very sensitive to changes in this component.

<b>Application Process</b>	<b>75.6</b>
Simplicity of application	74.5
Amount of supporting documentation required	76.2

According to their comments, borrowers seem equally concerned about the simplicity of the application process and the documentation needed:

*“Simplify forms. Work with people more. Notify people more.”*

*“Less paperwork and more timely response and clarifying documentation.”*

*“Make the process friendlier and real time data.”*

#### Professionalism

The score for the Professionalism of the staff during the consolidation process dropped from 82.5 to 79.5 but it was still the highest scoring component. According to the individual ratings shown below, “friendliness of department personnel” is rated higher than the other attributes by respondents. With an impact of 1.8, this component also has the highest total impact upon satisfaction. A 5 point increase in the score would result in a significant improvement in Customer Satisfaction score.

<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>79.5</b>
Willingness of department personnel to help you	79.0
Understanding of your needs	77.1
Friendliness of department personnel	83.4

In addition to having a staff that can meet the students’ needs, more personal contact and timely assistance are also important issues, as indicated by the following verbatim comments:

*“Deal with people that are more professional and who understand the program.”*

*“Speak to live personnel without waiting 30 minutes. One department to handle phones. I was switched around too much.”*

*“Clearer correspondence. More customer service representatives. Humans!”*



## Section 4: Direct Consolidation Loans *continued*

### Consolidation Options

The options for Consolidation were rated 74.9, the lowest score for all components. This represents a slight drop from the previous measure of 77.4. Individual attribute ratings are shown in the table below. Similar to last quarter, respondents rated “interest rate terms” much lower than availability or convenience of options. Consolidation Options has a fairly high impact of 1.1. As with last quarter, improvements in this component would have a significant impact upon Customer Satisfaction.

<b>Consolidation Options</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Availability of consolidation options	76.2
Interest rate terms	70.5
Convenience of repayment options	78.6

According to the verbatim responses, lower interest rates and information regarding the options available are most important to borrowers:

*“They charge too much interest. Possibly observe the situation and if someone is trying to pay they should give them a break on the interest loan or cut them some slack.”*

*“Make it known that it (Consolidation) is available. Make it known what you are getting into. Have a pamphlet or something.”*

*“Make the options more clear.”*

### Confidence and Recommendation

Borrowers’ Confidence in the Department of Education servicing their loan remained steady at 78.9, while the likelihood of borrowers to Recommend the Direct Consolidation Loan Program to others dropped from 85.0 to 83.4.

<b>Confidence</b>	<b>78.9</b>
Confidence in servicing your loan	78.9

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>83.4</b>
Likelihood to Recommend?	83.4





## Section 5: Deferment & Forbearance

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## Section 5: Deferment & Forbearance

### General Conclusions and Findings

	Quarter 2/2000	Quarter 3/2000
ACSI Score	76.1	78.1
Confidence	79.5	81.2
Recommendation	86.4	87.7
Customer complaint rate	17.0%	15.7%

Customers' overall satisfaction with the Deferment and Forbearance segment is a moderately high 78.1 for this quarter and the complaint rate dropped slightly to 15.7%. Recommendation remained quite high at 87.7. The component Professionalism increased significantly from 82.0 to 87.3, and, as has been seen elsewhere, this component is the highest scoring with the attribute, "friendliness of the personnel" rated the highest at 88.1. Once again, the front-line personnel are regarded as the greatest strength in a segment.

Other areas of strength are, "willingness to help you" (87.5) and "understanding your needs" (86.3), each in the Professionalism component.

As for areas of weakness, or "soft spots", most customers would like to see a reduction in the amount of supporting documentation necessary to apply for deferment or forbearance. Additionally, despite the relatively high rating they give to "fairness of terms", customers would like to have more options, which may seem like a contradiction, given that borrowers think the present terms are fair.

Application Process has the lowest score (77.8), but also a fairly low total impact on satisfaction of 0.8. Options has a combination of a relatively low score (78.1), the highest total impact (1.2), and the weakest attribute, "availability of options (75.8).

Specific areas that could use attention within the Deferment and Forbearance segment are:

- Availability of options (75.8)
- Amount of supporting documentation required (77.5)
- Simplicity of application (78.2)

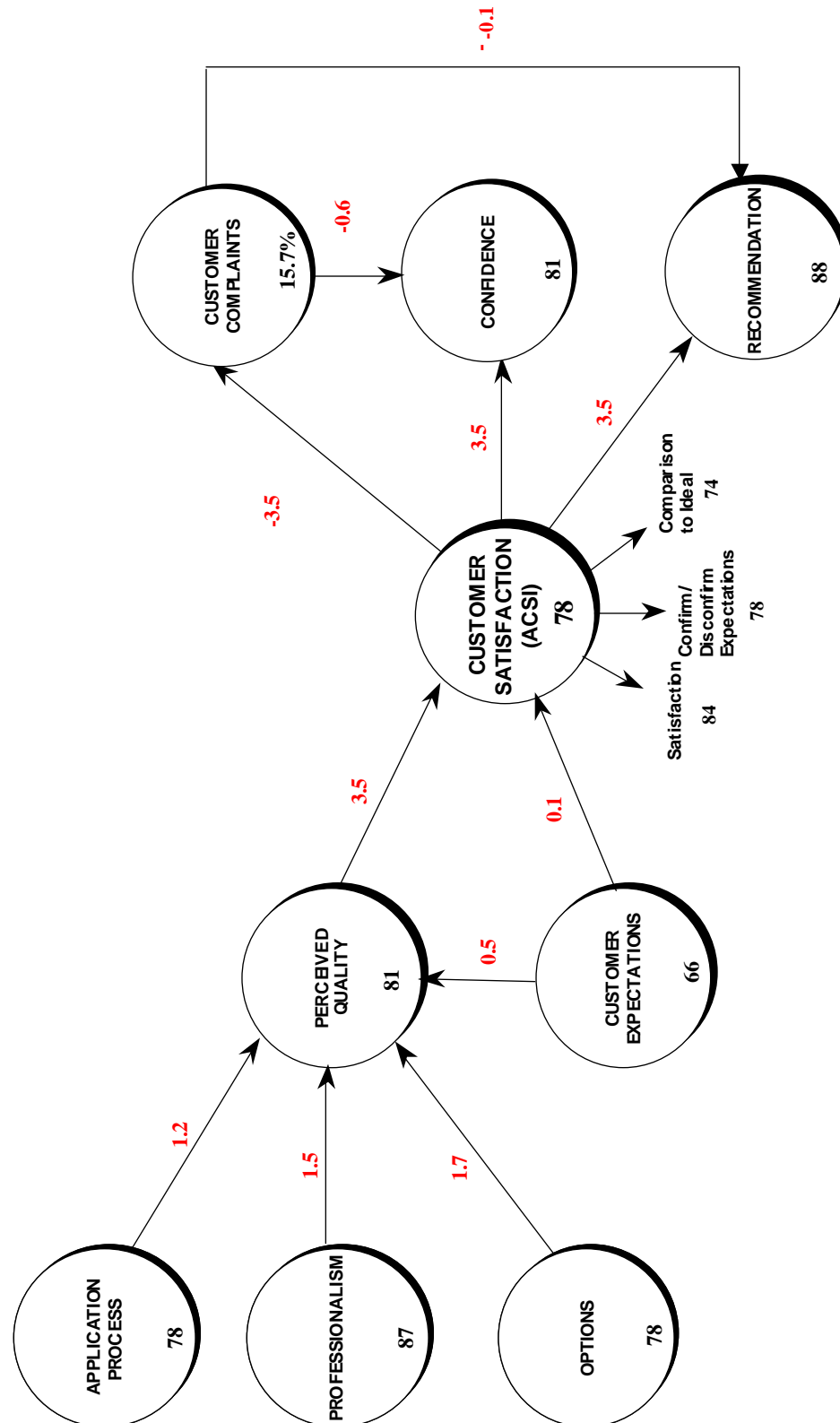
*"Require less documentation."*

*"Do away with forbearance or make it your last option. Look at the measures to help students out."*



## Section 5: Deferment & Forbearance continued

The ACSI Model Picture for Deferment & Forbearance

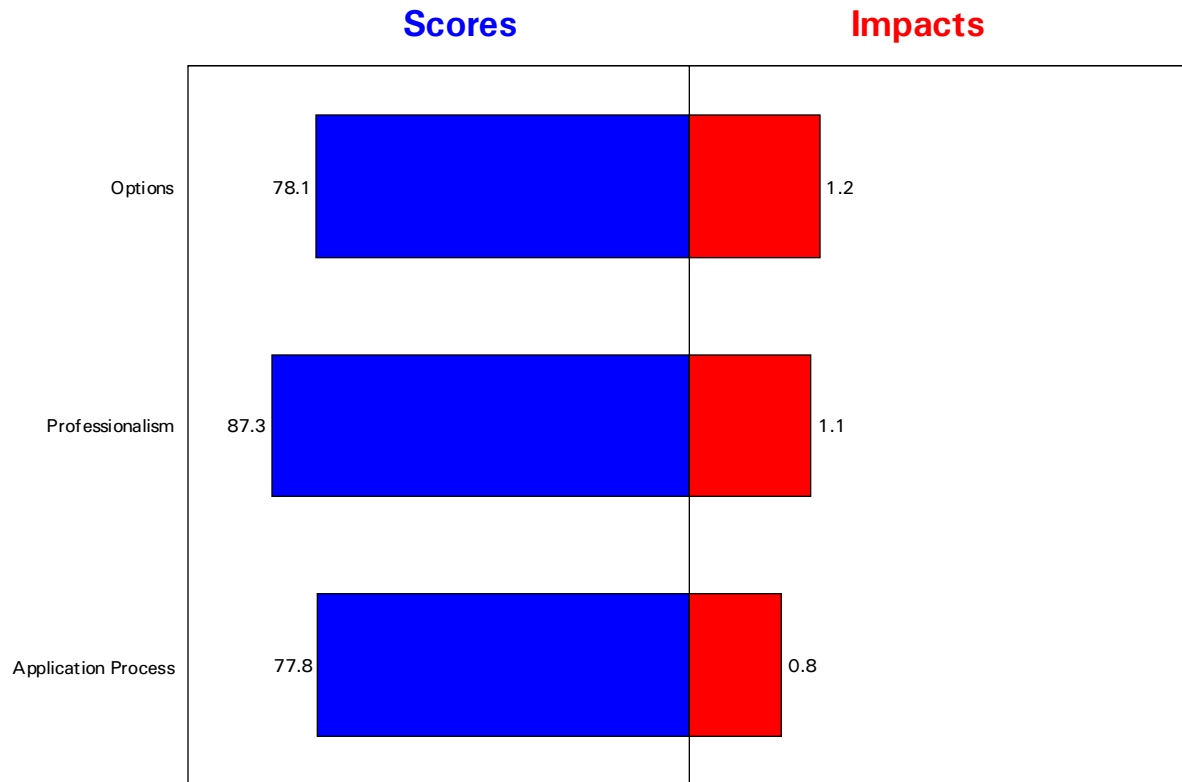


*Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.*



## Section 5: Deferment & Forbearance continued

### Component Scores and Impacts for Deferment & Forbearance



*Note: Impacts represent total impact of component upon Customer Satisfaction.*



## Section 5: Deferment & Forbearance continued

### Scores and Ratings

	<b>Q3 2000</b>
<b>Customer Satisfaction (Index)</b>	<b>78.1</b>
Satisfaction	83.5
Satisfaction Compared to Expectations	77.7
Satisfaction Compared to Ideal	73.8
<b>Overall Quality</b>	<b>81.2</b>
Overall quality of process	81.2
<b>Prior Expectations</b>	<b>66.0</b>
Prior expectations	66.0
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Application Process</b>	<b>77.8</b>
Simplicity of Application	78.2
Amount of supporting documentation required	77.5
<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>87.3</b>
Willingness to help you	87.5
Understanding you needs	86.3
Friendliness of the personnel	88.1
<b>Options</b>	<b>78.1</b>
Availability of options	75.8
Fairness of terms	79.9
<b>Customer Complaints</b>	<b>15.7</b>
Complaints?	15.7
<b>Confidence</b>	<b>81.2</b>
Confidence in service	81.2
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>87.7</b>
Likelihood to Recommend	87.7



## Section 5: Deferment & Forbearance continued

### Detailed Discussion of Components

#### Application Process

The Application Process for placing loans into Deferment or Forbearance has a score of 77.8 (the previous quarter was 78.7) making it the lowest scoring component in this segment. Individual attribute ratings are shown in the table below. The total impact upon Customer Satisfaction is 0.8. Therefore, a 5 point improvement in this component would only lead to a slight increase in Customer Satisfaction.

<b>Application Process</b>	<b>77.8</b>
Simplicity of Application	78.2
Amount of supporting documentation required	77.5

The verbatim comments indicate that borrowers would prefer a simplified application and a reduction in the amount of documentation required:

*“Consideration, less hassle, and reality.”*

*“Simpler. Relax the standards.”*

*“Require less documentation.”*

#### Professionalism

This component considers the Professionalism of the staff at the SFA. The score had a significant increase of 5.3 points this quarter, making it the highest scoring component (87.3). The individual attribute ratings show “understanding your needs” scored less favorably than the other attributes. The Professionalism component has the second highest total impact (1.1) indicating it is a key area for attention, however, due to its very high score there is not much room for improvement. If resources are shifted from this component, a drop in the score could result, which would lead to a decrease in Customer Satisfaction.

<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>87.3</b>
Willingness to help you	87.5
Understanding your needs	86.3
Friendliness of the personnel	88.1

According to the verbatim comments, respondents would like the SFA staff to play a more active role when assisting borrowers:

*“Follow up on the students.”*

*“To keep up with the person and let them know how far behind they are on their payments.”*



## Section 5: Deferment & Forbearance continued

### Deferment/Forbearance Options

Respondents rate the options for Deferment or Forbearance at 78.1. This score showed little change from last quarter (78.4). The individual attribute ratings below show that borrowers favor the “fairness of terms” over “availability of options” indicating that, despite the fact that students think the terms are fair, they want more options when it comes to Deferment and Forbearance. This component has the highest total impact upon Customer Satisfaction (1.2) and a comparatively low score making it an ideal area for improvement.

<b>Options</b>	<b>78.1</b>
Availability of options	75.8
Fairness of terms	79.9

The verbatim comments reaffirm students’ concerns about the availability of options and also raise the issue of high interest rates:

*“Kill interest on forbearance and make it similar to deferment. Financial difficulty leads to a deferment. Why charge such a high rate of interest on the deferment or forbearance?”*

*“Do away with forbearance or make it your last option. Look at the measures to help students out.”*

### Confidence and Recommendation

Borrowers were asked to rate their Confidence in the service that the SFA provides and how likely they would be to Recommend the Deferment/Forbearance options to others. Confidence was rated an 81.2 and Recommendation received a score of 87.7. Both outcome measures made minor improvements compared to their previous quarter scores (79.5 and 86.4, respectively).

<b>Confidence</b>	<b>81.2</b>
Confidence in service	81.2

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>87.7</b>
Likelihood to Recommend	87.7





# Appendix A: Additional Analysis

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## Additional Analysis

### 1-800-4FEDAID Scores and Significant Differences

	Q2 2000	Q3 2000	Significant Difference at 90% C.I.
Accessibility	77.7	81.8	↑
Professionalism	85.8	87.7	
Helpfulness	83.4	85.8	
Prior Expectations	75.1	81.1	↑
Overall Quality	83.5	86.1	
Customer Satisfaction (Index)	80.2	83.5	↑
Customer Complaints	1.2	1.6	
Use Again?	90.4	90.9	
Recommendation	89.2	91.0	
Sample Size	245	246	



## Additional Analysis continued

### Student Guide Scores and Significant Differences

	Q2 2000	Q3 2000	Significant Difference at 90% C.I.
Availability	89.4	92.8	↑
Content	82.3	82.7	
Helpfulness	83.3	84.0	
Prior Expectations	75.1	76.0	
Overall Quality	85.9	87.2	
Customer Satisfaction (Index)	79.3	80.5	
Customer Complaints	9.5	6.3	
Likelihood to use Student Guide	86.4	87.9	
Recommendation	89.4	91.5	
Sample Size	241	239	



## Additional Analysis continued

### Billing and Servicing Scores and Significant Differences

	Q2 2000	Q3 2000	Significant Difference at 90% C.I.
Accuracy	81.2	79.3	
Timeliness	72.7	74.9	
Content	78.5	79.5	
Prior Expectations	68.2	62.6	↓
Overall Quality	77.1	74.0	
Customer Satisfaction (Index)	71.5	69.7	
Customer Complaints	24.4	26.6	
Confidence	76.9	77.0	
Sample Size	235	241	



## Additional Analysis continued

### Direct Consolidation Loans Scores and Significant Differences

	Q2 2000	Q3 2000	Significant Difference at 90% C.I.
Application Process	76.5	75.6	
Professionalism	82.5	79.5	
Consolidation Options	77.4	74.9	
Prior Expectations	66.5	67.6	
Overall Quality	79.0	77.5	
Customer Satisfaction (Index)	74.9	73.9	
Customer Complaints	13.8	16.7	
Confidence	78.3	78.9	
Recommendation	85.0	83.4	
Sample Size	248	245	



## Additional Analysis continued

### Deferment and Forbearance Scores and Significant Differences

	Q2 2000	Q3 2000	Significant Difference at 90% C.I.
Application Process	78.7	77.8	
Professionalism	82.0	87.3	↑
Options	78.4	78.1	
Prior Expectations	66.4	66.0	
Overall Quality	77.8	81.2	
Customer Satisfaction (Index)	76.1	78.1	
Customer Complaints	17.0	15.7	
Confidence	79.5	81.2	
Recommendation	86.4	87.7	
Sample Size	241	236	



## Additional Analysis continued

### Have Seen An Overall Improvement in the Past 12 Months

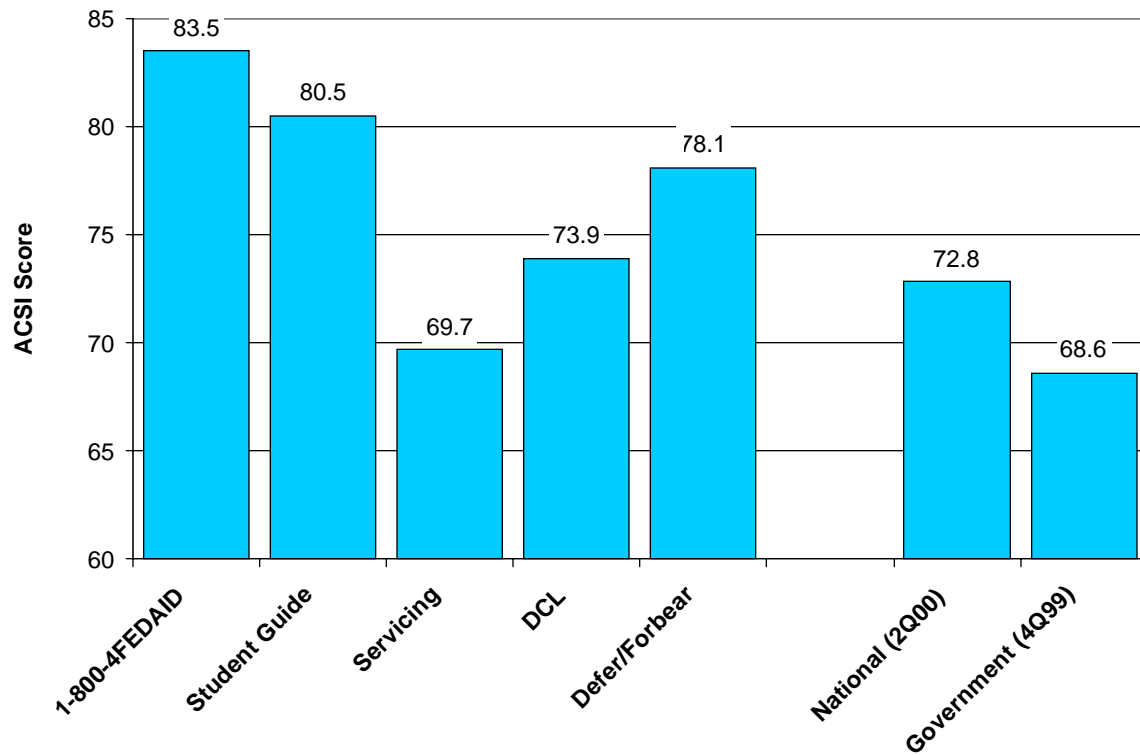
	Noticed Improvement			Valid N
	Yes	No	Do not know	
<b>1-800-4FEDAID</b>	26.9	19.6	53.5	245
<b>Billing and Servicing</b>	32.4	58.1	9.5	241





## Additional Analysis continued

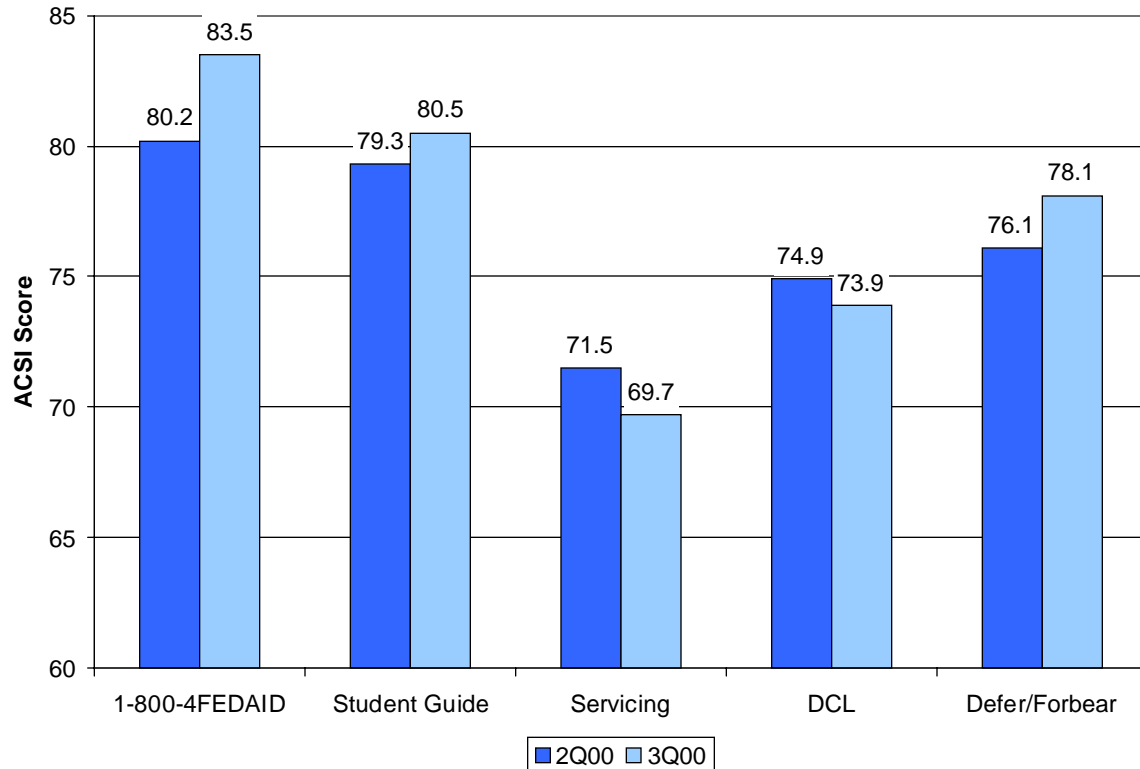
### ACSI Scores for 5 Segments of Students Channel





## Additional Analysis continued

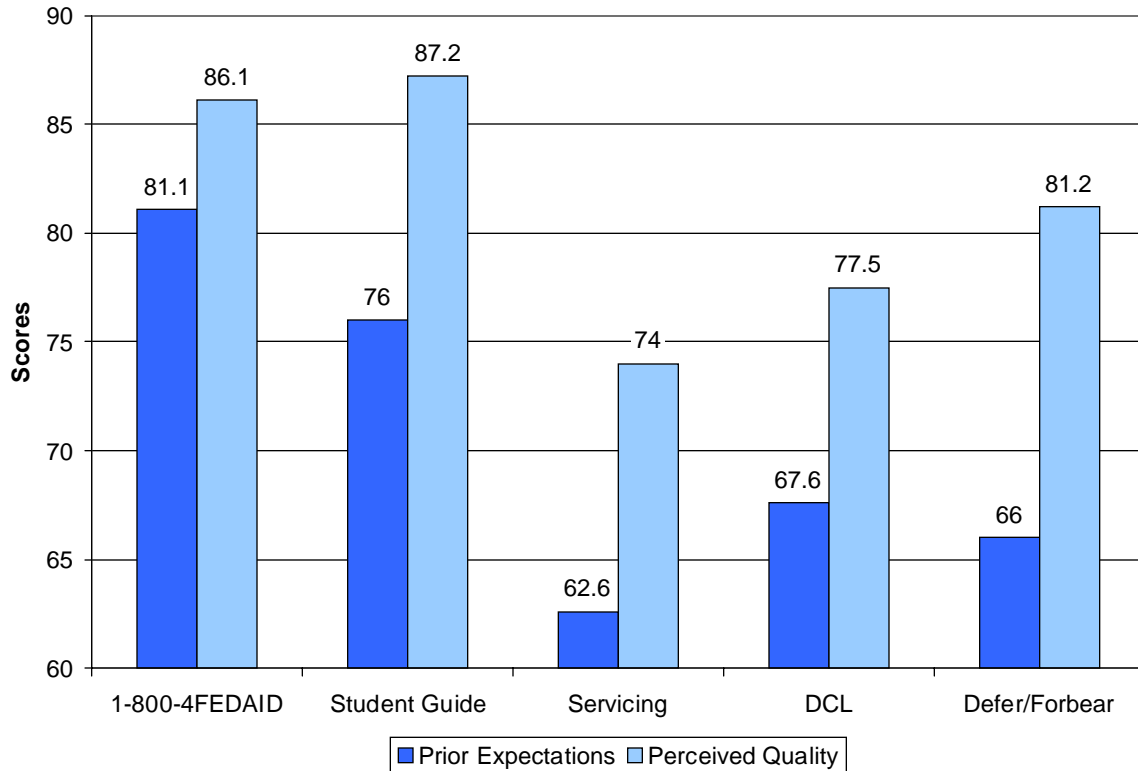
Only 1-800-4FEDAID Saw Significant Improvement from 2Q to 3Q





## Additional Analysis continued

### Perceived Quality Exceeds Prior Expectations in Every Segment







## Appendix B: Verbatim Comments

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## Appendix B - Verbatims - Table of Contents

<b>1-800-4FEDAID .....</b>	<b>72</b>
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Professionalism	
Helpfulness in answering your questions or needs	
General Comments	
<b>Student Guide .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Organization/Format/Content	
Helpfulness	
General Comments	
<b>Billing &amp; Servicing .....</b>	<b>74</b>
Accuracy	
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Payments	
Payment Options	
Customer Service	
General Comments	
<b>Direct Consolidation Loan .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Application process	
Professionalism of staff	
Consolidation options	
General Comments	
<b>Deferment/Forbearance .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Application Process	
Professionalism of SFA staff	
Deferment/Forbearance options	
General Comments	



# Verbatim Comments

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## 1-800-4FEDAID

[Responses to Q15: What could the Department of Education do to make their toll-free service better?]

### Accessibility

- *Make more operators available. Mail information to customers. To contact live operators.*
- *More representatives.*

### Professionalism

- *Be friendly.*
- *More friendly people.*
- *Train their people to listen more. Get records squared away.*
- *Have faster customer service and have reps that have better knowledge of the aspects of the student aide program.*
- *Do not dismiss the person right away. Answer questions over the phone.*
- *Have better personnel.*
- *Customer service could be a lot more friendly.*
- *More courteous representatives.*
- *To have friendlier service reps.*

### Helpfulness in Answering Your Questions or Needs

- *Limited on what they can do of result of calling. Give more latitude on what they can do over the phone as opposed to hard copy.*
- *The kind of information I needed, they could not give me.*
- *They never say the same thing. One tells you something and the other tells you something different.*

### General Comments

- *Faster TAP.*
- *It's fine.*
- *More clear on what to do about financial aide.*
- *I don't know about the phone. Make the forms. It makes more sense.*
- *I should be able to go to the computer and access it on my own.*
- *Taking each case into consideration and look at the people as people, not as numbers.*
- *Nothing. They do a good job.*





## Verbatim Comments continued

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### Student Guide

#### Organization/Format/Content

- *I recommend more information regarding loans. Especially TAP.*
- *Give out a little more information.*
- *A further scope of the subject, of the language.*
- *Too many pages.*
- *List books that resource funds.*
- *More information on eligibility for returning students.*
- *A list of phone numbers for things needed.*
- *Some reference so that you can do it if you don't qualify for financial aid. They need to have more information on how people will qualify for it.*
- *More information.*
- *More information for adults continuing education.*

#### Helpfulness

- *It's hard.*
- *I recommend that the language be clearer. More useful information.*
- *I recommend that the information be made clearer.*
- *Nothing really. I just felt that I didn't get much out of it.*
- *Gear it more towards older people.*
- *Put it in plain English.*

#### General Comments

- *I am 48 years old and I need support to help with my family income.*
- *There's no funding for graduate school.*
- *Continue what you are doing.*
- *I would like to receive one.*
- *Do not lose the application once it is filed.*
- *Perfect.*
- *Too many strings attached. Too iffy.*
- *Provide more programs for graduate students.*
- *Make more money available for graduate students.*
- *Make a support line for questions.*
- *They should call homes faster than they do.*



## Verbatim Comments continued

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### Billing & Servicing

[Responses to Q15: What could the Department of Education do to make the loan repayment process better?]

#### Accuracy

- *Advanced loan information. More frequent and accurate billing.*
- *Have statements arrive sooner. Have balances reflect more accurate billing.*
- *Make accurate statements about proper balance.*

#### Timeliness

- *The statement can come out sooner and be very clear on what the students are paying back.*
- *Have statements arrive sooner. Have balances reflect more accurate billing.*
- *Advanced loan information. More frequent and accurate billing.*
- *Send the bill within 30 days. The interest should not be identifiable.*
- *Speed up the process by getting the statements to me to avoid higher interest. I don't receive my statement until five days before it's due. Resolve this, and I would be happy.*
- *Send the statement out a little bit before it's due. It took all my interest and added it to the total loan payment without telling me.*

#### Content

- *I don't understand what they have to pay back.*
- *Have better statements. Easier to read.*
- *Just have the bill more reflective of the actual payments.*
- *Make the bills clearer.*

#### Payments

- *Take away the interest or lower it.*
- *Apply more towards the principle.*
- *Lower interest rates. I don't want the loan to collect interest if I'm going to school full-time.*
- *Capitalizing interest without time to pay. I thought it was very unfair. To be able to talk to a supervisor immediately instead of going through several different people. Also, having people call back when they are supposed to and actually remember ...*
- *Lower interest rate.*
- *Zero interest. Payback only what you borrowed.*



## Verbatim Comments continued

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- *Lower interest rate.*
- *I need the payment lowered.*
- *Reduce the amount of payments in proportion of a longer life of the loan.*
- *Coupon book. Give suggestions to bring interest rates down and help on how to pay it.*
- *Offer better interest rates on the same student loans. My husband received different offers and it's a shame somethings going on. We have the same loans and we got them one year apart. Why do we receive different rates.*
- *Lower the finance charges.*
- *Make the payment lower.*
- *Not having high monthly payments and too high interest rates.*
- *Lower interest rate.*

### Payment Options

- *The process of combining them into one loan.*
- *Probably make the forbearance process better.*
- *Make better options for the students. Giving more options to repay their loan back.*
- *The deferment process could be explained better.*
- *I recommend that the loan department should make loan holders aware that loans can be consolidated and there should be more information given about the loan payments, like the type of loan you can choose. First year structure only allows for payment o...*
- *We'll pay electronically. We would like to receive payments that way.*

### Customer Service

- *Capitalizing interest without time to pay. I thought it was very unfair. To be able to talk to a supervisor immediately instead of going through several different people. Also, having people call back when they are supposed to and actually remember ...*
- *Have easier access to live service.*
- *Have people be more knowledgeable.*
- *When you call, not have to talk to several people.*
- *Treat people instead of trying to get them off the phone. Train reps to answer questions adequately. Missed information about loans. It has been terrible and horrendous. They didn't even take out my auto deduction for the month of June because they...*

### General Comments

- *Educate the people before they sign the loan.*
- *Listen to customers.*



## Verbatim Comments continued

---

- *Check out the schools better.*
- *They need a trusted third party administration and another for auditing.*
- *Offer the services that William D. Ford is offering.*
- *Communications between the people that work between companies.*
- *Making me include my spouses income made me very mad. Not having to include spouses income would make the process better.*
- *Some kind of workshop before agreement to loan on payment process.*
- *They need to be more organized. The right hand needs to know what the left hand is doing. They are highly disorganized and they'd never make it in the private sector.*
- *Make sure students benefit better and check schools out.*



## Verbatim Comments continued

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### Direct Consolidation Loans

[Responses to Q17: What could the Department of Education do to make the direct consolidation loan program better?]

### Application Process

- *Much better data management is needed immediately.*
- *I recommend that a complete review be done to include all outstanding loans. I recommend that an inquiry be made to assure that there is no double billing after loans have been transferred to another company. I recommend that a financial update be made...*
- *Make paperwork a lot more simpler and make sure people in the office know what they are doing.*
- *I recommend that the literature and all information be done in a clearer format. I recommend that a thorough search be made to include all loans when reports are forwarded. I recommend that steps be taken to insure that requested programs be properly...*
- *Simplify forms. Work with the people more. Notify people more.*
- *A little more explanation on the whole program.*
- *Less paperwork and more timely response and clarifying documentation.*
- *Send out notices letting you know what's happening.*
- *More information up front about the program.*
- *Do not send so many letters saying the same thing.*
- *More itemized statements of amounts, so that you can see before and after comparison of the amounts owed. Explain monthly amount of 48 dollars and after consolidation it became 62 dollars. I don't understand the difference.*
- *Speed up the process.*
- *Make the process friendlier and real time data.*
- *They can be quicker in processing the applications. Information should be consistent. I've been paying double payments and it's not getting credited. Completely dissatisfied and if I could take away my loan, I would switch to someone who is more for ...*
- *Look into more factors.*
- *Language should be generated for someone who has training, not accounting. Clarity and support are very minimal.*
- *Help with the approval process.*
- *Have paperwork be on time. Have it arrive on time. Better notification of services to me. Better customer service. I'm sick of being rerouted to other numbers, only to be rerouted again. Statement errors. Repetitious mail sent to my house that was...*
- *Try to get more information on people and work with them a little more.*

### Professionalism of Staff

- *Get rid of the answering machine system.*



## Verbatim Comments continued

---

- *More communication between customer service.*
- *Speak to live personnel without waiting 30 minutes. One department to handle phones. I was switched around to much.*
- *Customer service reps all have the same answer, problems with getting information in a timely manner.*
- *Have people working on phones.*
- *Improve accessibility through 800 number. Have more people servicing the telephone. It's way too long to wait for a live person.*
- *Clearer correspondence. More customer service representatives. Humans!*
- *Deal with people that are more professional and who understand the program.*

### Consolidation Options

- *Make payments lower for students coming out of school.*
- *Don't include interest when consolidating. There should be no interest.*
- *Lower interest rates. It's kind of misleading about the price through the life of the loan.*
- *They charge too much interest. Possibly observe the situation and if someone is trying to pay they should give them a break on the interest loan or cut them some slack.*
- *Make it known that it's available. Make it known what you're getting into. Have a pamphlet or something.*
- *Make the options more clear.*
- *I think they could incorporate all the loans into one payment instead of many payments.*
- *They should look at the fact that things do happen, like illness. Give every application a one on one. Lower the interest rate.*
- *Not charge too much interest. Be more flexible on the amount of payment.*
- *Better chart of options of what we have to pay back.*
- *Eliminate payoffs. Extend the period of time to pay it back.*

### General Comments

- *Inform more people. Get the word out. People who have the loans are abused. I would've done this sooner if I would've known.*
- *Not take so much from me when I am a single parent. I'd rather them take my income tax money.*
- *Understand that someone goes to school and gets a different job and their money is not what they think it is and can't make payments.*
- *To be more accurate.*
- *They need to help resolve problems that are their own fault.*
- *Get more people to consolidate.*
- *A better program needed.*
- *Better communication with each other.*



## Verbatim Comments continued

---

### Deferment & Forbearance

#### Application Process

- *I feel that the requirements to sign up at an unemployment agency should not be required. Students should have personal counselors to assist with updates of accounts and to answer questions.*
- *Consideration, less hassle, and reality.*
- *To not have to submit things three times.*
- *Stop the delay from the mailing or faxing and entering it into the system.*
- *Simpler. Relax the standards.*
- *Require less documentation.*

#### Professionalism of SFA Staff

- *Follow up on the students.*
- *Be courteous to people. Ninety-nine percent of the people who call really need deferment. If they had another option, they would use that.*
- *To call you before the payment and get customers needs.*
- *To keep up with the person and let them know how far behind they are on their payments.*
- *Teach customer service to be more helpful.*

#### Deferment/Forbearance Options

- *Allow them to have lower payments. It was the only reason I went in the first place, but I had no choice because I lost my job and needed lower payments.*
- *Do away with forbearance or make it your last option. Look at other measures to help students out. To particularly help teachers who teach in a critical subject area and a critical demographic area.*
- *How much your interest will cost on your monthly bill.*
- *Extend the deferment time.*
- *More options why you are applying for forbearance.*
- *To have it set up so that interest does not occur.*
- *Simplify the options of maternity leave.*
- *Kill interest on forbearance and make it similar to deferment. Financial difficulty leads to a deferment. Why charge such a high rate of interest on the deferment or forbearance?*



## Verbatim Comments continued

---

### General Comments

- *Find out proper information about the G.I. Bill. They said they haven't received payment. I'm not supposed to pay with a G.I. Bill.*
- *To be more effective.*
- *There isn't any. I'm satisfied.*
- *Tell Clinton to make college free.*
- *Be more understanding of students' financial situations. Be willing to accept the time they need for deferment or forbearance.*
- *Send out the loan.*
- *I had not thought about it. More grant money is needed.*





# Appendix C: Questionnaires

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# U.S. Department of Education

## Students Channel/1-800-4FEDAID

### Questionnaire

(Items in BOLD are interviewer instructions, and are not intended to be read to the Client)  
(Items marked *i.e. or e.g.* should only be read if respondent needs clarification)

---

#### Introduction (Do not read)

---

INTRO1. Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from ICT on behalf of the United States Department of Education. May I please speak to **(name from ED/SFA list)**? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have called the Department of Education's toll-free help line.)**

- 1 > **(If speaking to right person, continue at INTRO4)**
- 2 > **(If asked to hold and wait for correct person, proceed at INTRO3 when respondent comes to phone)**
- 3 > **(If named person is not available, schedule callback)**
- 4 > **(If named person is no longer this number, use INTRO2)**
- 9 > **Refused/Hung Up**

INTRO2. Is there another number at which I could reach him/her? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have called the Department of Education's toll-free help line.)**

- 1 > **(Take number) >> Thank you and have a good day? (Contact new number)**
- 2 > **(Refused) >> Thank you and have a good day!**

INTRO3. **(When respondent comes to phone)**

Hello, this is *[interviewer name]* calling from ICT. We're calling as part of an initiative the United States Department of Education has undertaken to improve its customers' satisfaction. **(CONTINUE)**

INTRO4. You have, in the last three months, called the Department of Education's toll-free help line, 1-800-4FEDAID **(Interviewer: Can be pronounced, 1-800-4-Fed-aid)** for information. **(e.g., to get information about federal aid programs, or information regarding your loans.)**

Have you had previous experience with the Toll-Free Information Service prior to 3 months ago?

- 1. Yes **(Continue)**
- 2. No **(Thank you for your time! Good bye.)**
- 8. Don't know **(Thank you for your time! Good bye.)**
- 9. Refused **(Thank you for your time! Good bye.)**

INTRO5

The Department Of Education is conducting this survey with customers such as you to measure satisfaction with its products and services. I'd like to take some time now to go through this survey with you. This interview is authorized by Office of Management and Budget Control No. \_\_\_\_\_. Your comments will, of course, remain strictly confidential. Is now a good time for us to speak?

**(If Client asks how long the interview will take, respond with the following:)**

The discussion will take about 8-10 minutes depending on your opinions. Is this a good time?

Yes	1	<b>(Continue with Next Question)</b>
No	2	(Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?)

---

**Prior Expectations (Do not read)**

---

Let's start out by thinking back to before you called the toll-free number with your questions, and remembering your EXPECTATIONS about the quality of the toll-free service at that time. Please give me a rating on a 10 point scale on which "1" means your expectations were "not very high" and "10" means your expectations were "very high."

Q1. How would you rate your expectations of the overall quality 1-800-FEDAID phone service?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98	Don't know
99	Refused

---

**Accessibility (Do not read)**

---

Now think about the toll-free call you made to the Department of Education. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q2. The simplicity of using the automated telephone system

Q3. The availability of the customer service representative when needed

---

**Professionalism (Do not read)**

---

Now think about the professionalism of the representative that you spoke with and his/her attitude in dealing with your inquiry. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "very low" and "10" means "very high", how would you rate the customer service representative's ...

Q4. Friendliness

Q5. Their willingness to help you

Q6. Their understanding of your needs

---

**Helpfulness in Answering Your Questions or Needs (Do not read)**

---

Let's now consider the helpfulness of calling the toll-free number in answering your questions. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q7. The ability of the service to answer your question(s) on the first call

Q8. The thoroughness of information provided

Q9. The accuracy of information provided

---

**Overall Quality (Do not read)**

---

Q10. Now, please consider your overall experience with the toll-free service. Using a 10-point scale, on which "1" means "not very high" and "10" means "very high," how would you rate the overall quality of the service?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

- 98 Don't know
- 99 Refused

---

**ACSI Benchmark Questions (Do not read)**

---

Q11. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "very dissatisfied" and 10 means "very satisfied", how satisfied were you with using 1-800-4FEDAID?

Q12. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "exceeds your expectations," to what extent did using the toll-free number fall short of or exceeded your expectations?

Q13. Imagine what an ideal toll-free information service would be like. How well do you think 1-800-4FEDAID compares with that ideal service you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all close to the ideal," and "10" means "very close to the ideal."

Q14. In the past 12 months, have you seen an overall improvement in the Toll-Free Information Service?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

---

**Outcome Measures (Do not read)**

---

Q15. Have you ever contacted the Department of Education to complain about any aspect of its toll-free service?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 9 *Refused*

Q16. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where "1" means "not at all likely" and "10" means "very likely", how likely would you be to call 1-800-4FEDAID in the future if you have any questions about the federal student aid programs?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

- 98 Don't know
- 99 Refused

Q17. Finally, using the same 1-to-10 scale, how likely would you be to recommend to others that they call the toll free service if they had any questions about the federal student aid programs?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know

99 Refused

---

**Closing (Do not read)**

---

Q15. **(If Response to Q11 is “5” or less OR if response to Q16 is “5” or less, ask the following open-ended question; else skip)**

In your own words, what could the Department of Education do to make their toll-free service better?

---

---

---

That’s all the questions I had for you. Thank you for your time, and have a good day.

# U.S. Department of Education

## Students Channel

### Student Guide Questionnaire

(Items in BOLD are interviewer instructions, and are not intended to be read to the Client)  
(Items marked *i.e. or e.g.* should only be read if respondent needs clarification)

---

#### Introduction (Do not read)

---

INTRO1. Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from ICT on behalf of the United States Department of Education. May I please speak to **(name from ED/SFA list)**? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have requested a copy of the Student Guide for financial aid from the United States Department of Education. The Student Guide is a booklet that provides information about financial aid programs (loans, grants, and work-study) available from the U.S. Department of Education.)**

- 1 > **(If speaking to right person, continue at INTRO4)**
- 2 > **(If asked to hold and wait for correct person, proceed at INTRO3 when respondent comes to phone)**
- 3 > **(If named person is not available, schedule callback)**
- 4 > **(If named person is no longer this number, use INTRO2)**
- 9 > Refused/Hung Up

INTRO2. Is there another number at which I could reach him/her? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have requested a copy of the student guide for financial aid from the Department of Education. The Student Guide is a booklet that provides information about financial aid programs (loans, grants, and work-study) available from the U.S. Department of Education.)**

- 1 > **(Take number)** >> Thank you and have a good day? (Contact new number)
- 2 > **(Refused)** >> Thank you and have a good day!

INTRO3. **(When respondent comes to phone)**  
Hello, this is *[interviewer name]* calling from ICT, on behalf of the United States Department of Education. **(Continue)**

INTRO4. We're calling as part of an initiative the U.S. Department of Education has undertaken to improve its customers' satisfaction. Have you requested a copy of the "Student Guide for Financial Aid" from the Department of Education in the past two months? **(if necessary: This is a booklet that tells you about federal Student Financial Assistance programs and how to apply for them.)**

- 1 Yes >> **(Continue at INTRO5)**
- 2 No >> Thank you for your time today! Good bye.

INTRO5. The Department of Education is conducting this survey with customers such as you to measure satisfaction with its products and services. I'd like to take some time now to go through this survey with you. This interview is authorized by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Control No. \_\_\_\_\_. Your comments will, of course, remain strictly confidential. Is now a good time for us to speak?

**(If Client asks how long the interview will take, respond with the following:)**

The discussion will take about 8-10 minutes depending on your opinions. Is this a good time?

- 1 Yes **(Continue with Next Question)**
- 2 No **(Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?)**

---

**Prior Expectations (Do not read)**

---

Let's start out by thinking back to the time when you first received a copy of the Student Guide. Think about what your EXPECTATIONS were for what the overall quality of the Guide would be. Please give me a rating on a 10 point scale on which "1" means your expectations were "not very high" and "10" means your expectations were "very high."

Q1. How would you rate your expectations of the overall quality of the Student Guide before you received it?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know  
99 Refused

---

**Availability/Delivery (Do not read)**

---

Now think about your experience requesting and receiving the Student Guide. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q1. The availability of the Student Guide when you requested it

Q2. The promptness of delivery, considering when you requested it

---

**Organization/Format/Content (Do not read)**

---

Now think about the organization and content of the Student Guide. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate ...

Q3. The ease of finding what you needed

Q4. The thoroughness of information (if necessary; "completeness of information")

---

**Helpfulness (Do not read)**

---

Let's now consider how helpful the Student Guide was to you. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q5. The ease of understanding the information in the Guide

Q6. The relevance of information to your needs

Q7. The accuracy of information in the Guide

---

**Overall Quality (Do not read)**

---

Q8. Now, please consider your overall experience with the Student Guide. Using a 10-point scale, on which "1" means "not very high" and "10" means "very high," how would you rate the overall quality of the Student Guide?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know  
99 Refused



---

**ACSI Benchmark Questions (Do not read)**

---

- Q9. Using a 10-point scale on which “1” means “very dissatisfied” and 10 means “very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with the Student Guide?
- Q10. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "exceeds your expectations," to what extent did the Student Guide fall short of or exceed your expectations?
- Q11. Imagine what an ideal source of information for learning about federal student aid would be like. How well do you think the Student Guide compares with that ideal you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all close to the ideal," and "10" means "very close to the ideal."

---

**Outcome Measures (Do not read)**

---

- Q12. In the past 12 months, have you ever called anyone at the Department of Education because of any confusing or unclear language in the Student Guide?
- 1 Yes  
2 No  
9 *Refused*
- Q13. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “not at all likely” and “10” means “very likely”, how likely would you be to use the Student Guide again if you were to need information about student loans in the future?
- Q14. Finally, using the same 1-to-10 scale, how likely would you be to recommend the Student Guide to others that might have a need for it?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

- 98 Don't know  
99 Refused

---

**Closing (Do not read)**

---

- Q15. **(If Response to Q9 is “5” or less OR if the response to Q13 is “5” or less, ask the following open-ended question; else skip)**

In your own words, what could the Department of Education do to make the Student Guide better?

---

---

---

Those are all the questions I had for you. Thank you for your time, and have a good day.



# U.S. Department of Education

## Students Channel

### Billing & Servicing Questionnaire

(Items in BOLD are interviewer instructions, and are not intended to be read to the Client)  
(Items marked *i.e. or e.g.* should only be read if respondent needs clarification)

---

#### Introduction (Do not read)

---

INTRO1. Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from ICT on behalf of the United States Department of Education. May I please speak to **(name from ED/SFA list)**? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who are currently paying back student loans.)**

- 1 > **(If speaking to right person, continue at INTRO4)**
- 2 > **(If asked to hold and wait for correct person, proceed at INTRO3 when respondent comes to phone)**
- 3 > **(If named person is not available, schedule callback)**
- 4 > **(If named person is no longer this number, use INTRO2)**
- 9 > Refused/Hung Up

INTRO2. Is there another number at which I could reach him/her? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who are currently paying back student loans.)**

- 1 > **(Take number)** >> Thank you and have a good day? (Contact new number)
- 2 > **(Refused)** >> Thank you and have a good day!

INTRO3. **(When respondent comes to phone)**  
Hello, this is *[interviewer name]* calling from ICT, on behalf of the United States Department of Education. **(Continue)**

INTRO4. We're calling as part of an initiative the Department of Education has undertaken to improve its customers' satisfaction. Do you have any student loans borrowed directly from the federal government – a William D. Ford Direct Student Loan - that you are currently paying back?

- 1 Yes >> **(Continue at INTRO5)**
- 2 No >> Thank you for your time today! Good bye.

INTRO5. The Department Of Education is conducting this survey with customers such as you to measure satisfaction with its products and services. I'd like to take some time now to go through this survey with you. This interview is authorized by Office of Management and Budget Control No. \_\_\_\_\_. Your comments will, of course, remain strictly confidential. Is now a good time for us to speak?

**(If Client asks how long the interview will take, respond with the following:)**

The discussion will take about 8-10 minutes depending on your opinions. Is this a good time?

- 1 Yes **(Continue with Next Question)**
- 2 No **(Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?)**

---

**Prior Expectations (Do not read)**

---

For purposes of this survey, please consider only those student loans that are Direct Loans from the federal government. These are the loans that you are repaying directly to the federal government as opposed to some third party such as FFEL loans you'd pay to Sallie Mae. It does not include loans that have defaulted.

Let's start out by thinking back to the time before you started paying back your Direct Loans. Think about what your EXPECTATIONS were about the quality of the loan repayment process. Please give me a rating on a 10 point scale on which "1" means your expectations were "not very high" and "10" means your expectations were "very high."

Q1. How would you rate your prior expectations of the overall quality of the loan repayment process?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know

99 Refused

---

**Accuracy (Do not read)**

---

Now think about the monthly statements you receive for making payments on your loans. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q1. The accuracy of the statement balance

Q2. The accuracy of information about past payments

---

**Timeliness (Do not read)**

---

Now think about the timeliness of receiving your statement. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate ...

Q3. The consistency in when you receive statements (**i.e., the same time of the month each month**)

Q4. The amount of time given before payments are due

---

**Content (Do not read)**

---

Let's now consider the content of the statement. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q5. The ease of reading the statement

Q6. The sufficiency of information provided on the statement (**e.g., principal balances, computed interest, other fees**)

---

**Overall Quality (Do not read)**

---

Q7. Now, please consider all your experiences from the past year regarding the loan repayment for your Direct Loans. Using a 10-point scale, on which "1" means "not very high" and "10" means "very high," how would you rate the overall quality of the process for repaying your loans?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know

99 Refused

---

**ACSI Benchmark Questions (Do not read)**

---

- Q8. Using a 10-point scale on which “1” means “very dissatisfied” and 10 means “very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with the loan repayment process?
- Q9. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "exceeds your expectations," to what extent has the loan repayment process fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?
- Q10. Imagine what an ideal process would be for paying back your loans. How well do you think the current process compares with that ideal you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all close to the ideal," and "10" means "very close to the ideal."
- Q12. In the past 12 months, have you seen an overall improvement in the Billing Services?
- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
  - 8 Don't know
  - 9 Refused

---

**Outcome Measures (Do not read)**

---

- Q13. Have you ever complained about any aspect of the Direct Loan repayment process to the Department of Education? **(e.g., for such things as billing errors, late or missing bills, etc.)**
- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
  - 9 *Refused*
- Q14. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “not at all confident” and “10” means “completely confident”, how confident are you that the Department of Education is accurately servicing your loan for you? **(If necessary: “By servicing your loan we mean activities involved with maintaining contact between you and the government, including such things as processing payments, maintaining proper account information, and providing other information to you about such things as taxes and interest rate changes.”)**
- [RECORD RATING 1-10]
- 98 Don't know
  - 99 Refused

---

**Closing (Do not read)**

---

- Q15. **(If Response to Q8 is “5” or less, ask the following open-ended question; else skip)**  
In your own words, what could the Department of Education do to make the loan repayment process better?
- 
- 
- 

That’s all the questions I had for you. Thank you for your time, and have a good day.



# U.S. Department of Education

## Students Channel

### Direct Consolidation Loans Questionnaire

(Items in BOLD are interviewer instructions, and are not intended to be read to the Client)  
(Items marked *i.e. or e.g.* should only be read if respondent needs clarification)

---

#### Introduction (Do not read)

---

INTRO1. Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from ICT on behalf of the United States Department of Education. May I please speak to **(name from ED/SFA list)**? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have consolidated their student loans through the Department of Education.)**

- 1 > **(If speaking to right person, continue at INTRO4)**
- 2 > **(If asked to hold and wait for correct person, proceed at INTRO3 when respondent comes to phone)**
- 3 > **(If named person is not available, schedule callback)**
- 4 > **(If named person is no longer this number, use INTRO2)**
- 9 > Refused/Hung Up

INTRO2. Is there another number at which I could reach him/her? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have consolidated their student loans through the Department of Education.)**

- 1 > **(Take number)** >> Thank you and have a good day? (Contact new number)
- 2 > **(Refused)** >> Thank you and have a good day!

INTRO3. **(When respondent comes to phone)**  
Hello, this is *[interviewer name]* calling from [TBD], on behalf of the United States Department of Education.

INTRO4. We're calling as part of an initiative the Department of Education has undertaken to improve its customers' satisfaction. Do you have any student loans that you consolidated through a direct consolidation loan from the Department of Education? **(e.g., loans that you are paying back such as Stafford loans, direct loans, etc.)**

- 1 Yes >> **(Continue at INTRO5)**
- 2 No >> Thank you for your time today! Good bye.

INTRO5. The Department of Education is conducting this survey with customers such as you to measure satisfaction with its products and services. I'd like to take some time now to go through this survey with you. This interview is authorized by Office of Management and Budget Control No. \_\_\_\_\_. Your comments will, of course, remain strictly confidential. Is now a good time for us to speak?

**(If Client asks how long the interview will take, respond with the following:)**

The discussion will take about 8-10 minutes depending on your opinions. Is this a good time?

- 1 Yes **(Continue with Next Question)**
- 2 No **(Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?)**

---

**Prior Expectations (Do not read)**

---

Let's start out by thinking back to the time before you applied to have your loans consolidated. Think about what your EXPECTATIONS were for how the consolidation program would work. Please give me a rating on a 10 point scale on which "1" means your expectations were "not very high" and "10" means your expectations were "very high."

Q14. How would you rate your previous expectations of the overall quality of the loan consolidation program?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know

99 Refused

---

**Application Process (Do not read)**

---

Q2. When you applied for a consolidation did you submit your application electronically over the Internet, by telephone, or by completing a paper application?

1. Internet
2. Telephone
3. Paper Application
8. Don't know
9. Refused

In answering the following two questions, please consider the quality of the application form. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate ...

Q3. The simplicity of application (**i.e., to get your loans consolidated**)

Q4. The amount of supporting documentation required

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**Professionalism of Staff (Do not read)**

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Let's now consider the professionalism of the Department of Education Staff that you talked with during this process. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q5. The willingness of department personnel to help you

Q6. Their understandings of your needs

Q7. The friendliness of department personnel

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**Consolidation Options (Do not read)**

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Now think about the consolidation options that were offered. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

Q8. The availability of consolidation options that met your needs

Q9. The interest rate terms for consolidation loans

Q10. The convenience of repayment options for consolidation loans



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**Overall Quality (Do not read)**

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- Q11. Now, please consider all your experiences involved with consolidating your student loans. Using a 10-point scale, on which "1" means "not very high" and "10" means "very high," how would you rate the overall quality of the loan consolidation program?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

- 98 Don't know  
99 Refused

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**ACSI Benchmark Questions (Do not read)**

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- Q12. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "very dissatisfied" and 10 means "very satisfied", how satisfied are you with the direct consolidation loan program?
- Q13. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "exceeds your expectations," to what extent has the loan consolidation program fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?
- Q14. Imagine what an ideal program for consolidating your student loans would be like. How well do you think the current loan consolidation compares with that ideal program you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all close to the ideal," and "10" means "very close to the ideal."

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**Outcome Measures (Do not read)**

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- Q14. Have you ever complained to the Department of Education about any aspect of the direct consolidation loan program? **(e.g., the application or management of your consolidated loan)**

- 1 Yes  
2 No  
9 Refused

- Q15. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where "1" means "not at all confident" and "10" means "completely confident", how confident are you that the Department of Education is accurately servicing your loan for you?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

- 98 Don't know  
99 Refused

- Q16. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where "1" means "not at all likely" and "10" means "very likely", how likely would you be to recommend the direct consolidation loan program to others that might have a need for it?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

- 98 Don't know  
99 Refused

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**Closing Questions** (Do not read)

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Q17. (If Response to Q11 is “5” or less, OR if the response to Q16 is “5” or less, ask the following open-ended question; else skip)

In your own words, what could the Department of Education do to make the direct consolidation loan program better?

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That’s all the questions I had for you. Thank you for your time, and have a good day.

# U.S. Department of Education

## Students Channel

### Deferment/Forbearance Questionnaire

(Items in BOLD are interviewer instructions, and are not intended to be read to the Client)  
(Items marked *i.e. or e.g.* should only be read if respondent needs clarification)

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#### Introduction (Do not read)

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INTRO1. Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from ICT on behalf of the United States Department of Education. May I please speak to **(name from ED/SFA list)**? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have student loans that are currently in deferment or forbearance.)**

- 1 > **(If speaking to right person, continue at INTRO4)**
- 2 > **(If asked to hold and wait for correct person, proceed at INTRO3 when respondent comes to phone)**
- 3 > **(If named person is not available, schedule callback)**
- 4 > **(If named person is no longer at this number, use INTRO2)**
- 9 > Refused/Hung Up

INTRO2. Is there another number at which I could reach him/her? **(If necessary: We're conducting a customer satisfaction survey and are trying to contact people who have student loans that are currently in deferment or forbearance.)**

- 1 > **(Take number)** >> Thank you and have a good day? (Contact new number)
- 2 > **(Refused)** >> Thank you and have a good day!

INTRO3. **(When respondent comes to phone)**  
Hello, this is *[interviewer name]* calling from ICT, on behalf of the United States Department of Education. **(Continue)**

INTRO4. We're calling as part of an initiative the Department of Education has undertaken to improve its customers' satisfaction. Do you have any student loans borrowed directly from the federal government – a William D. Ford Direct Student Loan - that you are currently paying back

- 1 Yes >> **(Continue at INTRO5)**
- 2 No >> Thank you for your time today! Good bye.

INTRO5. Have you applied for a deferment or forbearance in the past year?

- 1 Yes >> **(Continue)**
- 2 No >> Thank you for your time today! Good bye.

INTRO6. The Department Of Education is conducting this survey with customers such as you to measure satisfaction with its products and services. I'd like to take some time now to go through this survey with you. This interview is authorized by Office of Management and Budget Control No. \_\_\_\_\_. Your comments will, of course, remain strictly confidential. Is now a good time for us to speak?

**(If Client asks how long the interview will take, respond with the following:)**

The discussion will take about 8-10 minutes depending on your opinions. Is this a good time?

- 1 Yes **(Continue with Next Question)**
- 2 No **(Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?)**

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**Prior Expectations (Do not read)**

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For purposes of this survey, please consider only those student loans that are Direct Loans from the federal government. These are the loans that you are repaying directly to the federal government as opposed to some third party such as FFEL loans you'd pay to Sallie Mae. It does not include loans that have defaulted.

Let's start out by thinking back to the time before you applied to have your Direct Loans deferred or placed into forbearance. Think about what your EXPECTATIONS were for the process you had to go through to get your loans deferred or placed into forbearance.

- Q1. Using a rating on a 10 point scale on which "1" means your expectations were "not very high" and "10" means your expectations were "very high", how would you rate your prior expectations of the deferment/forbearance process?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know  
99 Refused

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**Application Process (Do not read)**

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Now think about the application process for placing your loan into deferment or forbearance. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

- Q1. The simplicity of application (i.e., to place a loan into deferment or forbearance)  
Q2. Amount of supporting documentation required

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**Professionalism of SFA Staff (Do not read)**

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Let's now consider the professionalism of the staff at the Department of Education. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

- Q3. The willingness of department personnel to help you  
Q4. Their understandings of your needs  
Q5. The friendliness of department personnel

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**Deferment/Forbearance Options (Do not read)**

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Now think about the Deferment/Forbearance options you had. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

- Q6. The availability of options that met your needs  
Q7. The fairness of terms for deferment or forbearance of loans

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**Overall Quality (Do not read)**

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- Q8. Using a 10-point scale, on which "1" means "not very high" and "10" means "very high," how would you rate the overall quality of the process for getting your Direct Loans deferred or placed into forbearance?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know  
99 Refused

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**ACSI Benchmark Questions (Do not read)**

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- Q9. Using a 10-point scale on which “1” means “very dissatisfied” and 10 means “very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with placing your Direct Loans into deferment or forbearance? **[RECORD RATING 1-10]**
- Q10. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "exceeds your expectations," to what extent has placing your Direct Loans into deferment or forbearance fallen short of or exceeded your expectations? **[RECORD RATING 1-10]**
- Q11. Imagine what an ideal process would be like for placing your Direct Loans into deferment or forbearance. **(INTERVIEWER PAUSE)** How well do you think the current process compares with that ideal process you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all close to the ideal," and "10" means "very close to the ideal." **[RECORD RATING 1-10]**

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**Outcome Measures (Do not read)**

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- Q12. Have you ever complained to the Department of Education about any aspect of your loans in deferment or forbearance?
- 1 Yes  
2 No  
9 *Refused*
- Q13. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “not at all confident” and “10” means “completely confident”, how confident are you that the Department of Education is accurately servicing your loan for you? *(If necessary: “By servicing your loan we mean activities involved with maintaining contact between you and the government, including such things as processing payments, maintaining proper account information, and providing other information to you about such things as taxes and interest rate changes.”)*
- [RECORD RATING 1-10]**
- 98 Don't know  
99 Refused
- Q14. Finally, using the same 1-to-10 scale, how likely would you be to recommend the deferment or forbearance options to others that might have a need for them?
- [RECORD RATING 1-10]**
- 98 Don't know  
99 Refused

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**Closing (Do not read)**

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- Q15. **(If Response to Q9 is “5” or less OR if the response to Q14 is “5” or less, ask the following open-ended question; else skip)**  
In your own words, what could the Department of Education do to make the deferment and forbearance process better?

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That’s all the questions I had for you. Thank you for your time, and have a good day.